

Unsafe Water Alerts

During an emergency, such as a major earthquake, LADWP may issue an “Unsafe Water Alert” until it is verified that the water is not contaminated and is safe to drink. During an Unsafe Water Alert, follow the instructions as described in the notice.

How to Store an Emergency Water Supply

Tap water can be stored in storage containers for emergency use. To create an emergency water supply from tap water, storage containers must first be sterilized and the water must be treated before it is stored. The stored water should be changed every six months. This process of sterilizing containers, treating and storing the water is outlined below:

1. Choosing the Container

To store an emergency water supply, begin by choosing food-grade containers made of heavy opaque plastic with screw-on caps.

Do not use the following:

- Plastic milk and juice containers, which are usually very thin and tend to crack and leak as they get old.
- Containers with snap-on caps, which do not seal as well as screw-on caps.
- Containers that previously have been used to hold liquid or solid toxic chemicals (e.g., bleach, pesticides, etc.)
- Glass containers

2. Cleaning and Sanitizing the Container

- a) Wash the containers with soapy water, then rinse thoroughly.
- b) Fill the container half full with water and add 1 cup of chlorine bleach for each gallon the container holds.

Caution: Do not use scented laundry bleach, powdered bleach, or swimming pool chlorine. These contain additional chemicals that are poisonous.

- c) Finish filling the container with water (all the way to the top). Put the cap on and lay the bottle on its side for about 3 minutes. This allows you to check if the container leaks while the bleach-water solution disinfects the cap. If the container leaks, do not use it.

- d) Pour out the bleach-water solution into the next container to be sterilized. The same disinfecting bleach-water solution can be used for several containers – simply “top off” the new container with water as needed.

Caution: Remember to pour the bleach-water solution down the drain when finished – this is not drinking water.

- e) Allow the empty sanitized container to air-dry before use or rinse with tap water.
- f) Fill the bottle with tap water. Leave a small air space at the top of the container to allow for expansion if the water heats up slightly where you store it.
- g) Put the cap on tightly.

3. Storing the Water

- a) Label the container as “drinking water” and include the preparation date.
- b) Keep water stored at a cool temperature (50-70°F).

Do not store the water as follows:

- In direct sunlight
 - In extreme temperatures
 - In areas where toxic substances (e.g., fumes of petroleum products, pesticides/herbicides, etc.) are present.
- c.) Check the containers periodically to ensure that the plastic has not cracked or developed leaks. If the containers are cracked or leak, the containers will need to be replaced.

Note: Change the water in the containers every six months.

Single Use Plastic Water Bottles

As an alternative, bottled water purchased at grocery stores can be used as an emergency water supply. The bottles should be stored in a location without exposure to sunlight, extreme temperatures, fumes of petroleum products, and pesticides/herbicides. Check the bottles periodically to ensure that the plastic has not cracked or developed leaks. If the containers are cracked or leak, the bottles will need to be replaced.