



Safe Water in Emergencies

You may not be able to use your water in an emergency.

A hurricane, flood, or other disaster can put bacteria or chemicals in the water and make people sick.

To be prepared, set aside enough water to last for 3 days. You will need water for drinking, preparing food, brushing your teeth as well as water for cooking, washing yourself and cleaning. You will need more water if you have pets.

You should store some of this water in small bottles to carry with you if you need to leave your home.

How much water do I need?

For drinking

At least 2 litres a day for each person. This water is for drinking, washing fruit or vegetables, and brushing your teeth.

For cooking, washing yourself, and cleaning

At least 2 litres a day for each person.

To be ready for 3 days, you need 12 litres of water for **every** person. You also need more water if you have pets.

Is my water safe?

What if my water is not safe to use?

If your tap water is not safe to use, you need to purify it or use bottled water for drinking, washing fruit or vegetables, and brushing your teeth.

Water from a municipal water supply

Your town, county or city will tell people if the water is safe. They will use their website or social media, or local radio or television to do this. You can also ask someone you trust to update you. Your municipality will tell you:

- if the water is safe for drinking
- what to do if it's not safe

Water from a private well

You need to test your water before you drink it or use it prepare food or brush your teeth.

If the water test shows that you have E. coli in your water, you need to purify it. Follow the process at <https://novascotia.ca/well-water-testing/>

To learn more, go to <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/wellwaterbookletEnglish.pdf> or call your local Environment and Climate Change office at 1-877-9ENVIRO (1-877-936-8476)

Water from a lake, stream or spring

Water from lakes, streams, rivers, ponds, and springs is usually not safe to drink. Drink this water only after you filter and purify it. The only way to be sure it is safe is to test it.

You can purify water in 1 of these ways:

- boil it
- use chlorine bleach
- use tablets

Boil water to purify it

Use chlorine bleach to purify water

- Use unscented bleach.
- Make sure the bottle says it is 4% to 6% chlorine.
- Check the table below to see how much bleach you need to purify your water.

- Stir the mixture well.
- Cover the mixture with a paper towel or set a lid on loosely.
- Let the mixture stand in a cooler or refrigerator for about 8 hours. This gives the bleach time to clean the water and evaporate before you use it.

Quantity	No. of Drops	Volume of Chlorine Solution (5.2% sodium hypochlorite)
1 litre	2	
2 litres	4	
3 litres	6	
4 litres	8	0.5 ml (1/8 tsp.)
1 gallon	8	0.5 ml (1/8 tsp.)
2 gallons	16	1.0 ml (1/8 tsp.)
3 gallons	24	1.2 ml (1/4 tsp.)
4 gallons	32	1.6 ml (3/8 tsp.)
5 gallons	40	2.0 ml (3/8 tsp.)

Use tablets to purify water

- Buy water purifying tablets at a drug store or a store that sells camping equipment.
- Follow the directions on the label.

More information

For households: <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/Boilwater-Factsheet.pdf>

For restaurants, hotels, hospitals, nursing homes, food producers, and convenience stores:

<https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/FactSheet-BoilAdvisoryPrecautions.pdf>