



Water Storage Guidelines

After a major earthquake it is likely that water mains will have broken and running water will be unavailable for some time – perhaps as long as a year for cities in the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Authorities recommend having at least a 2 week supply of water stored in your home per person, based on 1 gallon per person per day. This includes pets and is for drinking only (no cooking or washing).

There are several main options available for stockpiling water:

Option:	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Purchase drinking water at the grocery store in 2 gallon containers; store in your home. These containers cannot be refilled easily and should be replaced every year.	<i>Easiest for incrementally buying water, to avoid large expenditures. Found everywhere.</i>	<i>More wasteful and costly in the end, because you are paying a high price for the water.</i>
2. Purchase durable 4, 5, or 7 gallon water containers and fill with water yourself. Often stored in a shed or outside your home.	<i>The best all-around solution for most people. Containers can be moved and filled easily, and last for many years.</i>	<i>More costly in the short run, some preparation required, must have a place to store them.</i>
3. Purchase a refurbished 55 gallon drum that formerly held a beverage. You will also need a siphon and bung wrench.	<i>Cheapest long-term solution, lots of water, can't be stolen, and easy to dispense. Help the environment by reducing waste.</i>	<i>Once full, these drums cannot be moved easily. Water may have a slight residual taste after first filling.</i>
4. Purchase a new 55 gallon drum. You will also need a siphon and bung wrench.	<i>Cheap long-term solution, lots of water, can't be stolen, and easy to dispense.</i>	<i>Once full, these drums cannot be moved easily. New drums cost about double what refurbished drums cost.</i>

5. Larger, industrial-strength containers are also available in a range of sizes and shapes, including over 300 gallons. Contact us for via our contact page for more details.

These provide plenty of water for longer terms or larger groups and are typically inexpensive over the long run. Can be buried and accessed via a pump.

Large up-front cost. Requires more space.

So how water much do I need?

We like the 7 gallon options because it makes the calculation easier: each container is enough for one person/pet per week.

Family size:	Gallons needed:	Containers needed:	Approx. Cost:
1 person	14	2 containers (7 gallons each)	\$45
2 people/pets:	28	4 containers	\$90
3 people/pets:	42	6 containers	\$135
4 people/pets:	56	8 containers or 1 drum (55 gallons)	\$180 \$99
5 people/pets:	70	10 containers or 1 drum + 2 containers	\$225 \$144
6 people/pets:	84	12 containers or 1 drum + 4 containers	\$270 \$190

We sell and recommend the following containers:



Reliance Jumbo-Tainer (7 gallons)

This durable option has two handles for easier/shared lifting and its narrow form factor makes it easiest to carry, despite its weight (60lbs). These are stored vertically (not stacked).

Dimensions: 15.5 x 7.2 x 21.8 inches



Reliance Aqua-Tainer (7 gallons)

This option is the easiest one to find due to its popularity and wide availability. These are stored side by side (not stacked), outside or inside. Consider filling the floor of a closet and covering with plywood to create a shelf.

Dimensions: 11.25 x 11 x 15.25 inches



55 gallon drum (refurbished)

Most inexpensive option in the long term. Comes with a siphon and a bung wrench.

Dimensions: 22.5 x 33.5 inches, round

CDC instructions on storing water

If you purchase water storage containers, follow these steps before filling to clean and sanitize water storage containers:

1. Wash the storage container and rinse completely with water.
2. Sanitize the container with a solution made by mixing 1 teaspoon of unscented liquid household chlorine bleach in one quart of water.
3. Cover the container tightly and shake it well. Make sure the sanitizing bleach solution touches all inside surfaces of the container.
4. Wait at least 30 seconds and then pour the sanitizing solution out of the container.
5. Let the empty sanitized container air-dry before use OR rinse the empty container with clean, safe water that is available already.
6. Pour clean water into the sanitized container and cover with a tight lid.

For storing water containers:

- Label container as "drinking water" and include storage date.
- Replace stored water every six months.
- Keep stored water in a place with a fairly constant cool temperature (50-70° F).
- Do not store water containers in direct sunlight.
- Do not store water containers in areas where toxic substances, such as gasoline or pesticides, are present.

(Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/drinking/cleaning-preparing-storage-containers.html>)

Also note that no plastic water containers should be stored directly on concrete, as chemicals can leach in. Place a pad under them made of cardboard, wood, or similar material.