



Making sure you have Safe Water in an Emergency

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

A hurricane, flood, or other disaster can contaminate water with bacteria, chemicals, or other things that can make you sick.

To be prepared, set aside enough water to last for 3 days.

How much water do I need for 3 days?

For drinking

Have at least 2 litres for each person for each day for drinking; making formula, juice, or ice cubes; washing fruit or vegetables; and brushing your teeth.

Drinking water required:

$2 \text{ litres} \times \# \text{ people} \times 3 \text{ days} = \# \text{ litres of drinking water}$

For cooking, washing yourself, and cleaning:

Have at least 2 more litres for each person for each day.

Total water required:

$4 \text{ litres} \times \# \text{ people} \times 3 \text{ days} = \# \text{ litres of water required}$

Store some of this water in small bottles to carry with you if you need to evacuate your home. You may need additional water if you have pets.

What if my tap water is not safe to use?

If your tap water is not safe to use, you will need to boil the water or use bottled water for drinking; making formula, juice or ice cubes; washing fruit or vegetables; brushing your teeth; or cooking with it.

If you do not have access to boiled or bottled water, you can disinfect small amounts of water by following the instructions on the back of this brochure.

For more information on what to do during a boil water advisory, check these webpages:

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

For places that need to take special care with their water, such as restaurants, hotels, hospitals, nursing homes, food production facilities, and convenience stores: <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/FactSheet-BoilAdvisoryPrecautions.pdf>

How do I know when my water is safe if it comes from a municipal water supply?

Listen to local radio and TV stations. Your municipality will announce

- when the water is safe for drinking
- if you need to boil the water to make it safe for drinking and how long to boil it
- if you can use the water for washing and cleaning but not drinking
- if you need to use bottled water

How do I know when my water is safe if it comes from a private well?

After any disaster, you will need to have your water tested before you use it for drinking; making formula, juice or ice cubes; washing fruit or vegetables; brushing your teeth; or cooking with it.

If the water test shows that you need to disinfect your water, follow the process referred to at <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/privatewells.asp>

For more information on private wells, including

- how to make sure your well water is safe
- how to disinfect your well
- how to construct a safe well
- how to read the results of a water test
- a list of labs where you can get your water tested

<https://novascotia.ca/well-water-testing/> or call your local Environment and Climate Change office at **1-877-9ENVIRO (1-877-936-8476)**

Surface water is not for drinking

Surface water includes water from lakes, streams, rivers, ponds, and springs. Do NOT drink this water unless it has been properly filtered and disinfected. The only way to be sure it is safe is to test it.

For more information, check this webpage <https://novascotia.ca/nse/surface.water/docs/SurfaceWaterQA.pdf>

How to disinfect a small amount of water

During a boil water advisory, you can

- boil the water
- use bottled water
- disinfect water using chlorine bleach
- disinfect water using tablets

Disinfect using chlorine bleach

- Use bleach that is unscented.
- Make sure that it is 4% to 6% chlorine.
- Add drops of bleach to litres or gallons of water in quantities as shown in table below.

Quantity	No. of Drops	Teaspoons
1 litre	2	
2 litres	4	
3 litres	6	
4 litres	8	1/8 teaspoon
1 gallon	8	1/8 teaspoon
2 gallons	16	1/4 teaspoon
3 gallons	24	3/4 teaspoon
4 gallons	32	1/2 teaspoon
5 gallons	40	5/8 teaspoon

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

Disinfect using tablets to purify water

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

Visit our website at

<https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/drinking.water.asp> or call your local Environment and Climate Change office at **1-877-9ENVIRO (1-877-936-8476)**