

Sources

Emergency Water Sources

If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use water in your hot-water tank, in your plumbing and in ice cubes. As a last resort, you can use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl), but purify it first (described on the next page). Water beds hold up to 400 gallons, but some water beds contain toxic chemicals that are not fully removed by many purifiers. If you designate a water bed in your home as an emergency resource, drain it yearly and refill it with fresh water container two ounces of bleach per 120 gallons. Swimming pools are also large resources for water. But again, contain toxic chemicals that are not fully removed by many purifiers. Use swimming pools and water beds as sources of water for sanitation rather than for drinking purposes. To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the highest faucet in your house and draining the water from the lowest one. To use the water in your hot water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off, and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve and turning on a hot water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty. Do you know the location of your incoming water valve? You'll need to shut it off to stop contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines. If you need to seek water outside your home, you can use these sources. But purify the water before drinking it.

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

Avoid water with floating material, an odor or dark color. Use saltwater only if you distill it first.

Adapted from the FEMA library: "Emergency Food and Water Supplies"