

Don't Be Scared, Be Water Prepared



Water Emergency Preparedness



Natural disasters, power outages, or other unplanned events can interrupt the Department of Water Supply (DWS) from delivering a reliable supply of safe drinking water to all customers. If service interruptions impact water quality or supply, a water emergency may occur without warning. DWS encourages residents to become water prepared before a water emergency happens.

How Do I Become Water Prepared?

- **Determine Water Needs specific to you and your household.** Each person should have at least one (1) gallon of water per day for at least 14 days, according to the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) <https://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/public-resources/preparedness-information/>. Pets and livestock also will require water.
- **Store Water Safely.** Use only clean, dedicated, food-grade containers. Containers that have held food can transfer odors to the drinking water and should not be used for water storage. Wash containers thoroughly with dishwashing soap, sanitize using one teaspoon of mild liquid chlorine bleach per quart of water, and then rinse thoroughly. (*Note: Splash-Less®, color-safe, and scented bleaches will not disinfect water and should not be used.*) Fill containers from the tap, leaving as little air as possible. Store in a cool, dark area. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers more information at www.ready.gov/water.
- **Treat Water.** During an emergency, it may be necessary for the Department of Water Supply to issue a Boil Water Notice instructing customers to boil their tap water for at least one minute, allow it to cool, and store in a sterilized container. Pouring water back and forth between clean containers will improve taste by adding oxygen. Chemical disinfection is another safe way of disinfecting water. Disinfect water by adding 1/8 teaspoon (approximately 8-10 drops) of chlorine bleach per gallon of water. (*Make sure that the bleach contains a 5%-9% concentration of sodium hypochlorite.*) Stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight chlorine taste, repeat the dosage, and let stand for 15 minutes. If the water from the tap appears discolored or appears suspicious otherwise, do not use it until it has been treated properly for its intended use. Disinfecting with chlorine bleach will not remove pesticides, petroleum products or other chemicals from water. See www.ready.gov/water. For more detailed instructions on disinfecting drinking water, go to the website of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/making-water-safe.html.
- **Use Only Bottled Water.** Should conditions warrant, DWS will issue an Unsafe Water Advisory directing affected customers to use only bottled water for drinking, brushing teeth, cooking, and making ice. An Unsafe Water Advisory means affected customers are not able to treat their tap water in any way to make it safe to consume while the advisory is in effect.
- **Conserve Water.** Extend limited supplies by conserving water during emergencies. Use water only for essential drinking and sanitation needs. No lawn watering, car/boating washing, etc.
- **Stay Informed.** Sign up for free Hawai'i County Civil Defense alerts at <https://member.everbridge.net/index/371914103062563#/signup> or see www.hawaiicounty.gov/departments/civil-defense. The Department of Water Supply will post system updates, availability of emergency supplies provided by mobile water wagons, and other important information at www.hawaiidws.org and www.facebook.com/HawaiiDWS/.

For more information go to American Red Cross of Hawai'i www.redcross.org/local/hawaii/about-us/our-work/disaster-preparedness.html.

... *Water, Our Most Precious Resource... Ka Wai A Kāne...*

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