

12 Months of Preparedness

5. Water in a Disaster

After first aid, and actually along with first aid, water is the most important consideration in disaster preparedness. You will need water to stay alive after a major disaster like the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake could be. Water is needed for wound irrigation and sterilization. And, survival is thirsty business. Once you get to safety, you will be thirsty! So, plan on an immediate source of water. You need about a gallon of water per day per person, half for drinking and half for sanitation and other purposes. You must assume that it could be two weeks before relief water can get to you, so that's 14 gallons per person. For a family of 4 that could be 56 gallons!

How can you ensure having that much? Here are a few ways:

Put a drum or drums in the basement or an outbuilding and fill it with water. You will need to have chemicals to sterilize the water and/or change the water every year.

Use your hot water heater, which usually contains 40-80 gallons of water. You will need to learn which valves to open and which to close. The valve to drain the water gets clogged easily with sediment, so you need to purge it about every quarter or so.

And, if you can't get to the drum or water heater in a disaster, this is Oregon! There is water everywhere. Be aware that the pond, river, stream or creek has living organisms in it that could make you very sick. A good filter and/or a whole range of treatment chemicals can ensure the water is drinkable. All you need is a bucket. Even just a passing the water through a coffee filter and then boiling it works.

The best solution is to have multiple back-up plans.

1. Have water packets or bottles in your Go! Bag
2. Keep bottled water around the house (some in your freezer can also help keep things frozen)
3. Store some water and get a filter and treatment chemicals.

- ❖ Bottles of water
- ❖ Stored Water
- ❖ Water in Go! Bag
- ❖ Water filter(s)
- ❖ Chemical water treatments

