

What to do before, during, and after a water-system disruption

Before an Incident

1**Store emergency water**

Keep at least 1 gallon of water per person, per day, for a minimum of 3 days (FEMA/Ready.gov standard). Store in clean, food-grade, sealed containers.

2**Sign up for utility alerts**

Register for boil-water notices and outage alerts directly from your local water utility or municipality's emergency notification system.

3**Know your shutoff valve**

Locate and label your home's main water shutoff valve so you can act quickly if officials advise it during a contamination event.

4**Keep water treatment supplies on hand**

Store unscented liquid household chlorine bleach (for disinfection, per CDC ratios) and/or a water filter rated for biological contaminants.

During an Incident

1**Follow official guidance immediately**

Stop drinking or cooking with tap water the moment a boil-water or do-not-drink notice is issued by your water utility or local health department — do not wait to confirm independently.

2**Boil water correctly if advised**

Bring water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute (3 minutes above 6,500 ft elevation) per CDC guidance before drinking, cooking, or brushing teeth.

3**Use only bottled or properly treated water**

If boiling isn't possible, use commercially bottled water or water treated with the CDC's recommended bleach ratio (typically 1/8 teaspoon regular bleach per gallon, stirred and left to stand 30 minutes).

4**Don't rely on unverified claims**

Follow updates only from your water utility, local government, or CISA/EPA — not unverified social media posts.

After an Incident

1**Wait for the official all-clear**

Continue boiling or using bottled water until your utility formally lifts the advisory.

2**Flush your home plumbing**

Once cleared, run cold taps for several minutes and flush water heaters per manufacturer guidance before resuming normal use.

3**Report problems**

Report any ongoing discoloration, odor, or illness to your local water utility and health department.