



County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health and Quality

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PURIFYING WATER

In a disaster such as a large magnitude earthquake or wildfire, water systems will most likely suffer damage and safe water will not be available. Unless you have stored water, you will most likely have to use water from your water heater tank. This water would require disinfection in order to purify it. Prior to draining water from the heater tank, turn off the water supply and the gas or electricity to the tank.

PURIFICATION METHODS

BOILING: The best method for purifying water in a disaster is to boil water vigorously for 10 minutes.

PURIFICATION TABLETS: Available at most drug stores and camping supply stores. Carefully follow the directions on the package.

BLEACH PURIFICATION: Liquid household bleach (sodium hypochlorite 5.25%) can be used according to the chart below. Mix thoroughly in water and let stand for 30 minutes. The water should have a slight chlorine odor. If it doesn't, repeat the dose and let the water stand for another 30 minutes. Do not use bleach with soaps, detergents, or scents added. If liquid pool chlorine is used, (12% available chlorine) add half of the amounts of bleach shown on the chart below.

Amount of Water	Amount of Bleach (sodium hypochlorite 5.25%)	
	Clear Water	Cloudy Water
1 quart	2 drops	4 drops
1 gallon	8 drops	16 drops
5 gallons	½ tsp.	1 tsp.