

Conserving and Collecting Water

When your home's incoming water system fails

THE FOLLOWING STEPS will be helpful if you lose your home's water supply, whether it be from an earthquake, extended power outage, broken well pump, frozen/broken pipes, or contamination. Always assume and plan for the failure to last for an extended period of time. If you know a storm is coming fill your bathtub with water, add a splash of bleach, and cover with a plastic sheet.

- Turn off the main water supply to your house.
- Drain your pipes and save the water. In a multi-level house, collect from lowest faucets, after opening the faucets in the upper levels.
- Use your stored water sparingly, mainly drinking and cooking.
- Use the water in your water heater. First shut off your water heater's energy supply whether electricity or gas. Then open one hot and one cold faucet valve somewhere in your house to release the pressure on system. Then open the valve at the bottom of your tank (*remembering it could be very hot*). Attaching a short hose to the valve will make it easier to fill empty containers.
- Set up rain catching-devices. Use rain run-off from your roof for wash water (*body, cloths, dishes*) and rain caught by clean tarps for drinking and cooking.
- Gather ground water from a creek, river, pond, lake or puddles. Prepare ground water for drinking by filtering through a coffee filter, cotton cloth or quality paper towels, then boil or use bleach (*8 drops per gallon, two eye dropper squirts per 5-gallons*) to kill all harmful organisms. Using a quality filter system can also disinfect and purify water.
- Melt ice and snow. To be safe, disinfect by boiling, using bleach, or filter with a quality filtration system.
- Save toilet flush water by using 42-gallon, 3 mil black plastic bags in your toilet (*remove top 3rd of bag*). First, stuff a towel in bottom of empty bowl to prevent possible backwash from sewer system. Then place bag in toilet. Add a splash of diluted 1:5 bleach/water to excrement waste to kill germs and prevent odor. Empty when needed. A bag can last for several days. Place bags in outside sealed garbage type container.
- Save wash water by using disposable paper plates and bowls (*waxed type*).

MINIMUM WATER STORAGE: *Would be wise to store at least 100 gallons.*