



**COPE**  
**Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies**

## **Emergency Drinking Water**

### **Hidden Water Sources in Your Home**



If an earthquake or disaster catches you without a big enough stored supply of clean water, you can use the water in your **hot-water tank, pipes, and ice cubes**. A hot water tank has **about 25 to 50 gallons of water**. You **should not** use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet, toilet bowls, radiators, waterbeds, or swimming pools/spas.

Do you know the location of your incoming water valve? You'll need to shut it off to stop contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines, or a failure at the water treatment plant.

To use the water in your pipes, shut off the incoming water valve. Let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your house at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the house.

To use the water in your hot-water tank, be sure that plumbing fixtures and the water heater are not submerged by flood. Turn the electricity or gas off, and turn off the water intake valve. Start the water flowing by opening the drain at the bottom of the tank and turning on a hot-water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty.

If gas is turned off, do not attempt to turn it back on yourself. A representative from the power company should do that to avoid fire or explosion danger.

### **Ways to Treat Water for Safe Consumption**

**Boiling** – This is the safest process to treat water in a post disaster period. Use a large pot or kettle, boil water for at least one minute after boiling process begins. Allow to cool before drinking.

**Chlorination** – Use household liquid bleach such as Clorox that contain 5.25 to 6.0 % of sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented or colorsafe bleaches, or those with added cleaners. Because the potency of liquid bleach diminishes, use only bleach from a newly opened or unopened bottle. Use 16 drops (1/8 teaspoon) of liquid bleach per gallon of water, stir, and let stand 30 minutes. The water should have a slight odor of bleach. If not, repeat the dosage and process and let stand another 15 minutes. If no smell of bleach, discard the water and find another source.

---

COPE Program Materials are produced in cooperation with the following agencies and supported by Award No. 2006-0071 awarded by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Grants and Training (G&T).

The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this COPE program material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Homeland Security.



Funded in part  
by DHS



The City of Santa Rosa does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admissions or access to, or treatment of or employment in, its programs or activities. Requests for alternate formats may be made by contacting the Emergency Preparedness Program at (707) 543-3711. This information can also be accessed via the internet at: [cope.srcity.org](http://cope.srcity.org)