

# STORING EMERGENCY WATER

This fact sheet explains why storing water is one of the most important actions you can do to be prepared for an emergency.

## Why store water?

When a big quake hits and the Wellington faultline moves, the region's water supply network will be disrupted, meaning there may not be any water flowing from the treatment plants to the reservoirs in the cities.

Councils will have to shut off reservoirs to preserve the water that is already there. As a result, the water supply to our houses and work places will be cut off. The water in the reservoirs will be allocated to people living locally in the days that follow.

We cannot live without water. It is essential not only for drinking, but also for personal hygiene and food preparation.

It makes sense to store water so that you and your family will be self-sufficient for the initial period after the disaster strikes. Storing water is something that we can all do to become more prepared.

## How to store water

It's easy to store water. Wash out large, plastic soft drink bottles (not milk bottles) or buy plastic water storage containers and fill with cold tap water. Fill until the container is overflowing and then put the lid on tightly. Store the water low down in a cool, dark place like a storage cupboard, garage or shed. Label the bottles with the date and replace the water every 12 months.

You may be able to use water from your toilet cistern (if it has no chemical cleaners in it) or your hot water system. But don't count on these sources – specially stored water is better.

It's difficult to say how much water you should store. The old instruction of three litres of drinking water per person for three days is only enough for survival. You will need more for personal hygiene and food preparation. This could be 15 to 20 litres per person a day, for at least three days. But don't think it's too hard – storing some water is better than none at all!



Be like Ben – store emergency water at home.

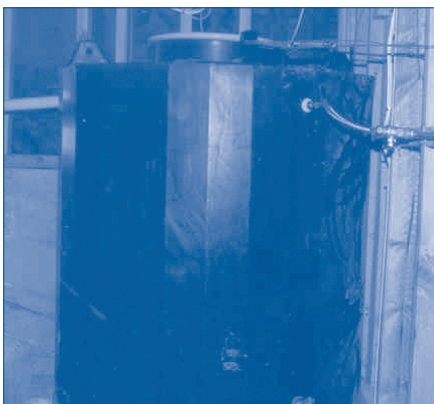


[www.wrcdemg.govt.nz](http://www.wrcdemg.govt.nz)

Hutt City Council  
Porirua City Council  
Upper Hutt City Council  
Wellington City Council  
Carterton District Council  
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Kapiti Coast District Council  
South Wairarapa District Council  
Greater Wellington Regional Council

## Will you have water after a big earthquake?

1. **If there is a big earthquake and the Wellington fault moves, the main supply pipes will break:**
  - this could happen in as many as six locations; and
  - no water main can withstand 4m horizontal and 1m vertical ground movement.
2. **Your council will then turn off the water flow out of the reservoirs to preserve stored water for the days and weeks ahead.**
3. **No water will come from your taps – you will have to survive on the water you have stored.**
4. **It will be a few days before arrangements are in place for you to collect some water from community distribution points:**
  - be prepared to travel some distance to reach these temporary sources of water, and to carry water back to your house.
5. **It will be several weeks before your full water supply is restored:**
  - it will take longer for those who live furthest from the water treatment plants, for example in Wellington City.
6. **Why so long?**
  - repairs will be needed in several different locations;
  - access around the region will be very difficult; and
  - all contracting resources will be fully stretched.
7. **You can help yourself by storing water in your own house now:**
  - each person requires between 15 and 20 litres of water per day for personal hygiene requirements, food preparation and drinking water;
  - containers from 4 litres to 10 litres in size are considered ideal for storage; and
  - community facilities and residential care facilities need to store more water, for people in their care and for others who may seek assistance. All organisations should store emergency water.



A range of containers, from specially-installed tanks to plastic bottles, can be used to store water.

For further information check the Yellow Pages, contact your local Council or the Wellington Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group using the details provided below:



[www.wrcdemg.govt.nz](http://www.wrcdemg.govt.nz)

PO Box 11646 | 142 Wakefield Street | Wellington | New Zealand  
Telephone 04 384 5708 | Facsimile 04 803 0379  
[www.wrcdemg.govt.nz](http://www.wrcdemg.govt.nz)



Without stored water, you'll have to travel to community distribution points – and carry the containers back home.

## Further reading

Protecting your health in an emergency, Ministry of Health, available at: [www.healthed.govt.nz/upload/PDF/10163.pdf](http://www.healthed.govt.nz/upload/PDF/10163.pdf)

Regional emergency management and hazard information, available at: [www.gw.govt.nz/hazards-and-em](http://www.gw.govt.nz/hazards-and-em)