



Water supply failure

Tap water can stop or become unsafe after a burst main, contamination or a wider emergency. This page helps you store water, use it sparingly, make it safe to drink, and follow official water notices.

CHECKLIST

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| ☐ Sealed bottled water, about 10 litres per person per day | ☐ Hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol |
| ☐ Unscented household bleach (check strength on label) | ☐ Wet wipes |
| ☐ Dropper or measuring spoon for bleach | ☐ Ready-to-use baby formula |
| ☐ Clean cloth or coffee filters for cloudy water | ☐ Bucket with a lid for carrying water |
| ☐ Clean lidded containers for treated water | ☐ Strong plastic bags and sawdust or litter for emergency toilet use |

BEFORE

- Store sealed bottled water: about 10 litres per person per day covers drinking, cooking and hygiene.
- Keep extra water for babies, pets and anyone whose medical condition uses more water.
- Keep stored water sealed, cool and dark, and check it once or twice a year.
- Freeze some part-filled bottles. They double as drinking water and cool packs.
- Keep unscented household bleach, a clean cloth and lidded containers for treating water.
- Keep hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol for when soap and safe water run short.

DURING

- Check your water supplier's website for updates on service in your area.
- Save bottled water for drinking, cooking, handwashing and baby formula.
- Under a boil notice, bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute, then cool and store covered.
- No way to boil? Add 2 drops of 5 to 9% unscented bleach per litre, stir and wait at least 30 minutes.
- Filter cloudy water through a clean cloth first, and double the bleach dose.
- Boiling does not remove chemicals. Under a do not drink notice, use only bottled water.
- Skip fridge ice and water dispensers. Brush teeth with bottled or boiled water.
- If toilets cannot flush, line the bowl with a bag, cover waste with sawdust, and seal it.

AFTER

- Keep following any boil or limit use notice until your water company says it can stop.
- If water comes out discoloured, run the cold kitchen tap nearest your stopcock for a while.
- Do not drink discoloured water until your water company confirms it is safe.
- Report discoloured water to your water company and note each time it happens.

IN THE UAE

In Dubai, call DEWA on 991, open 24 hours, for water technical emergencies. General questions go to the DEWA customer care centre on 04 601 9999.

MY NOTES

Sources: UK Government (Prepare), Water supply interruptions or outages (<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/be-informed-about-hazards/water-supply-interruptions-or-outages/>); Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MCF), Access to water during a crisis (<https://www.mcf.se/en/advice-for-individuals/home-preparedness-prepping-for-at-least-a-week/access-to-water-during-a-crisis/>); CDC, How to Make Water Safe in an Emergency (<https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/index.html>); CDC, Drinking Water Advisories: An Overview (<https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/drinking-water-advisories-an-overview.html>); CDC, What You Can Do to Prevent Diarrheal Illness After a Disaster (<https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/safety/index.html>); CDC, Preventing Crypto at Home During a Boil Water Advisory (<https://www.cdc.gov/cryptosporidium/prevention/crypto-home-boil-water.html>); Drinking Water Inspectorate (UK), Discoloured water (<https://www.dwi.gov.uk/consumers/learn-more-about-your-water/discoloured-water/>); UK Government (Prepare), Get prepared for emergencies (<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/>); Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), Contact Us (<https://www.dewa.gov.ae/en/about-us/support-and-points-of-interest/contact-us>)

General guidance in our own words. Always follow your local authorities.