Water, Water, Everywhere!

In this, our fifth month of preparing for all kinds of emergencies, our list of things to collect once more includes water, just as it did in the first month. That's not a mistake. Having sufficient drinkable water available to make us 2 Weeks Ready is one of the more challenging items we need to manage as we work on disaster preparedness.

To be able to survive for two weeks without utilities means we must somehow figure out how to collect and store 14 gallons of water for each person and pet in our household. A gallon of water weighs approximately 8.33 pounds. For only one person, therefore, we need almost 117 pounds of water. A family of four needs 466 pounds or 56 gallons of water. A family of four with two cats and a dog should plan to store 98 gallons of water weighing 816 pounds.

Having read that it's not wise to store water in plastic milk jugs because of their tendency to leak and collapse, I began searching for receptacles that would be up to the task of storing so much water. A common solution is the blue five-gallon container. Again, to make it through 14 days with sufficient water, each person and pet in a household will need 3 of these five-gallon containers readily available to see them through a two-week period.

A person living alone could probably find space for three of these blue containers, maybe keeping one in a garage, one in the kitchen, and one in a laundry room or closet. But the challenge of storage might appear almost insurmountable for larger families with multiple pets.

The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) has prepared a "Be 2 Weeks Ready Tool Kit" that offers some suggestions on storing potable water:

- Store water where anyone in the household can access it.
- If possible, store water in a dark, dry, consistently cool space that stays at a relatively constant temperature (50-70 F).
- If possible, do not store water in direct sunlight.
- Do not store water near chemicals, fuel, pesticides, herbicides, or products with strong odors that can be absorbed by the storage container and transferred to the water.
- If possible, store parts of your water supply throughout your living space so if a disaster damages parts of your home, you can still access other parts of your supply.
- Store some water in your freezer to create jugs of ice that can be used in a cooler when transporting food and provide safe drinking water as the ice melts.
- Storing water up high can be dangerous because it could fall during an earthquake or be difficult to move.

Some creative spaces where you can store [smaller containers of] water include:

- Under beds and sinks
- In cabinets and closets
- Behind books on bookshelves
- In garages and storage sheds
- Under the seats in your car

OEM's "Be 2 Weeks Ready Tool Kit" also provides instructions on a number of ways to purify water if you're uncertain about its safety. To access this valuable resource that includes multiple disaster preparedness plans (a water plan, food plan, waste and hygiene plan, shelter plan, and first-aid plan), go to:

BEPREPARED BULD AN EMERGENCY KIT Include enough food, water, and medical supplies to prepare in case of an emergency. Essential Documents

Create a Disaster Preparedness Kit Month Five, October 2024

To Do:

☐ Develop an Emergency Network among family, friends, and neighbors. You'll need each other.

To Collect:

- ☐ 3 gallons water *
- ☐ 3 cans soup *
- ☐ Dry nuts
- ☐ Puzzle books, games, books
- ☐ 1 rain poncho *
- * For everything followed by an asterisk, be sure to multiply by the number of people in your household (e.g., a family of four people will need 12 gallons of water, 12 cans of soup, and one rain poncho for each member of the family.



Our country's most recent disaster, Hurricane Helene, has ravaged several states and claimed hundreds of lives. We can help millions of people continue recovery efforts. See page 1 of the newsletter for specifics on how to contribute to Lutheran Disaster Response.