

An adequate supply of water is an important part of a home emergency kit. But storing water is not quite as simple as filling some old milk jugs and putting them on a shelf. Sioux City Emergency Management encourages residents to keep these tips in mind when storing water:

- Pre-packaged bottled water can be stored through its expiration date.
- Tap water must be stored in clean, sterilized glass or plastic containers. Using milk and juice containers that are not sterilized can cause harmful bacteria to form in the containers.

- To clean the containers, wash them in warm, soapy water. To sterilize, mix one tablespoon of unscented bleach with a gallon of water, then fill the containers with the solution. Let them stand for five minutes. Rinse the bottles with water, then fill them with tap water. Seal the containers securely, and then label them with the current date. Replace the tap water every six months.
- Store water in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight and heat sources.
- Do not store water near gasoline, pesticides, chemicals or similar substances.
- If you plan to store water in your freezer, leave two to three inches of space in the container; water expands as it freezes. Freezing your water has two advantages, you have containers of ice that may be placed in coolers to keep perishable foods cold for extended periods, and you can then drink the water when the ice melts. You will also make your freezer more efficient because the ice will fill up unused space, help keep the other products cold, and cause the freezer to run less often.
- If you know that the water supply has been disrupted, close the inlet valve on your hot water heater, this way water will not be siphoned out. You may drain the water for washing, cooking and drinking if need be.
- **Store at least one gallon of water per person per day; have enough water to last at least 7-10 days.**