Storing Water During a Boil Water Advisory

How do I treat or disinfect tap water to store during a boil water advisory?
You need to boil tap water before it’s safe to drink, use, or store. To do this:

1. Fill a pot or kettle with tap water and heat it on the stove until it reaches a full boil. You can also use an electric kettle to do this.
2. Let the water boil for 1 minute.
3. Turn off the heat and let the water cool. Once cool, put the water in a clean, disinfected container.

If the water tastes flat, leave space for air in the container and shake it well a few times. This will add air to the water, which will make it taste better.

What types of containers can I use to store water?
Store boiled water in clean, disinfected, plastic, food-grade bottles or containers. Make sure they’re airtight, sturdy, and won’t break easily. You can buy containers at department or camping supply stores, or use clean, disinfected 2-litre plastic pop bottles with tight-fitting screw caps to store water.

If you’re storing a lot of water (e.g., in 10-litre or 18-litre water containers), make sure everyone in the home can lift the full containers. One litre of water weighs about 1 kg (2.2 lbs.).

What types of containers can’t be used to store water?
Don’t store water in:

- containers that were used to hold chemicals (e.g., bleach, laundry detergent)
- milk or juice containers made of plastic or cardboard
**How do I clean and disinfect water storage containers?**

1. Wash out the storage containers with hot, soapy tap water and rinse them.
2. Mix 5 mL (1 tsp) of unscented, liquid household chlorine bleach (5.25%) with 1 litre of safe water (boiled or bottled water). Don’t use bleach that is scented, colour-safe, or with added cleansers.
3. Pour the bleach and water mixture into the container. Close the container and shake it well for 30 seconds.
4. Pour out the mixture and rinse the container with safe water.

**How much water do I need to store?**

Store at least a 3-day supply of 5 litres of water per day for each person or pet in the home. This would mean at least 15 litres of stored water for each person or pet. If you can, store a 2-week supply, which would be about 70 litres per person or pet.

**How do I store water?**

Store water in a cool, dark place. Put the containers in dark, plastic bags to keep the light out.

You can store treated water in well-sealed containers for 6 months. Write the fill date on the containers so you know when to use them by.

Commercially-bottled water is safe to keep for 1 year if it’s in the original, sealed container. Use all the water in one bottle before you open another one. Check the expiry date before you use bottled water.

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For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

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