

LESSON FROM TEXAS:

Store water for an emergency

A catastrophic winter storm hit Texas in February 2021. Many were completely unprepared for such a disaster, which left entire towns without electricity and basic necessities—most essentially *water*. Whole communities had no safe running water for long periods and were under orders to boil any available water, including melted ice and snow, before consuming it.

While it's unlikely that La Habra Heights will have a similar winter crisis, we could certainly find ourselves without water for extended periods because of a different kind of emergency—particularly a major earthquake.

There is an 86% probability of a magnitude 7.0 or greater earthquake in Southern California over the next 30 years. The proximity of La Habra Heights to the Puente Hills Thrust Fault—which caused the magnitude 5.9 Whittier Narrows quake in 1987—is of real concern to us. A magnitude 7.5 earthquake on this fault could kill up to 18,000 people and cause widespread devastation to all major urban areas and infrastructure near us. Such a quake would be nearly 20 times more powerful than the Whittier Narrows event. Water and other necessities would likely be in short supply (to learn more about this fault, see the April 2018 *Heights Life*).

To be prepared, we need to store enough water not only for ourselves, but also for our animals, because we have an unusually large number of small and large animals, including many horses, living in our city.

Let's have a look at water-storage recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Bottled water is best

Unopened, commercially bottled water is the safest and most reliable source of water in an emergency. Observe expiration dates.

How much water to store

People: For drinking and sanitation, store at least one gallon of water per person per day for three days. Store even more water in hot weather and for pregnant women and persons who are sick. If possible, store a two-week supply. Replace non-store-bought, stored water every six months.

Animals: Daily water needs of animals vary dramatically by type and size. The following daily recommendations were developed by the University of California:

- Horse**—12-15 gallons
- Cow**—10-20 gallons
- Donkey**—6 gallons
- Llama, alpaca**—2-5 gallons
- Sheep, goat, pig**—1-2 gallons
- Dog, cat, other small pet**—1 gallon

Use food-grade containers



Use FDA-approved, food-grade storage containers that will not transfer toxic substances into stored water. Such containers can be found at camping supply stores and ordered online.

If you are unable to use a food-grade container, be sure the container you choose:

- Has a top that can be closed tightly.
- Is made of durable, unbreakable materials (i.e., not glass).
- Has a narrow neck or opening so that you can easily pour out water with minimum spillage.

Never use containers that previously had been used to hold toxic liquid or solid chemicals (bleach, pesticides, etc.).

Photo above: Anek Socha (Pikabay)

How to make non-store-bought water safe to drink:

BOIL

This method will kill bacteria, viruses, and parasites.



Boil your water for 1 minute.
At elevations above 6,500 feet, boil for 3 minutes. Let the water cool.

DISINFECT

This method will kill most viruses and bacteria.

Add 8 drops or a little less than 1/8 of a teaspoon of 5%-8.25% unscented household bleach to 1 gallon water.

For cloudy tap water, use 16 drops or 1/4 teaspoon



Add bleach to water.



Mix well.



Wait at least 30 minutes before using.

FILTER

This method can remove parasites.

Most portable water filters do not remove bacteria or viruses. Choose a water filter labeled to remove parasites, and follow manufacturer's instructions.



CDC image

