



Water Emergency Preparedness

Natural disasters, power outages, blackouts, or other unexpected events can disrupt the ability of the Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) to provide water service to the community. Since water quality and water availability may be seriously impacted, the BWS encourages residents to be prepared and to plan in advance for a water emergency.

How can I prepare for a water emergency?

In preparing for an emergency, residents should ensure their basic emergency kits are ready. The kit should include at least one gallon of water per person per day (for drinking and sanitation) for at least 14 days. When news of a potential emergency is announced, we recommend our customers:

- **Stay tuned to media reports:** The BWS will issue water information bulletins and appropriate actions to be taken through the media. Take precautionary actions only when directed by the BWS.

Some precautionary actions could include executing water conservation measures, disconnecting devices that automatically use water, shutting off your main water valve, storing water or keeping water use to an absolute minimum, etc. In the event of an actual emergency, the BWS would issue detailed instructions on what actions should be taken.

What do I do if there is a power outage?

Keep water use to an absolute minimum. All of the BWS's pumps need electricity to operate. This means that during a power outage, the BWS will have limited ability to pump water out of our wells and other water sources and up to our reservoirs. Until power can be restored, the water left in your community's reservoirs will be all the water that is available to you, so it is essential that residents use water sparingly – for drinking and sanitation purposes only. Turn off or disconnect any devices or fixtures that regularly draw water. Such devices include automatic icemakers and irrigation systems. Please do not fill containers with water as this will drain our reservoirs quicker and allow less water for you and the rest of your community, until power is restored.

What do I do during a water emergency?

Emergency Period.

- **BWS:** During this period, the BWS takes preventative measures such as securing all pumps and facilities to prevent damage to our specialized equipment.
- **Residents:** Continue to listen to news reports for updated information. Execute the actions directed by the BWS.

Recovery Period.

- **BWS:** Our personnel will assess the damage and begin recovery operations to fully restore water service to our customers. Restoring water service to all Oahu customers is our highest priority.
- **Residents:** Continue to listen to news reports about the status of the water system in your area and what precautionary and conservation efforts you should follow. Once water is restored to your area, you should continue to use water for essential needs only – drinking, personal hygiene, laundry and clean-up purposes. Although water service may be available, time is required to allow our electrically powered pumps to replenish reservoirs to normal levels.

If communities run out of water, the BWS will make every effort to provide emergency water supplies through water wagons. However, it is important to note that there are a limited number of water wagons and road conditions following a catastrophic natural disaster may prevent the BWS from getting a water wagon to your community. This is why it is critical that you listen for and follow the advisories that will be issued by the BWS during any emergency situation.

How do I store water?

If the BWS advises you to store water, you should:

1. **Use clean containers:** Do not use containers that stored food with strong odors (mayonnaise, pickles, etc) as the water will pick up the odor during storage.
2. **Disinfect containers:** Wash containers thoroughly, then rinse it in a mild bleach solution (one capful of liquid bleach to one gallon of water), and then rinse thoroughly.
3. **Fill container with water from the tap:** Fill the container to the top, keeping a minimal amount of air between the water and the cap. To ensure the water is safe to drink, add one drop of mild liquid bleach per gallon of water, cap and store it in a cool, dark place.
4. **Extended Storage:** If you plan to store water for four weeks or longer, add one half cap of mild liquid bleach per gallon of water, cap and store in a cool, dark place.



Water should be stored in clean, disinfected containers, which come in a variety of shapes and sizes including traditional bottles (shown above) and stackable storage bricks or blocks (shown at right).



Where can I get more information?

How to Store Drinking Water for an Emergency:

- Go to the BWS website at <http://www.boardofwatersupply.com/community/emergency-preparedness>

General Disaster Preparedness / Emergency Kits:

- Go to the Hawaii State Civil Defense (SCD) website at <http://www.scd.hawaii.gov/>
- Go to the City Department of Emergency Management (DEM) website at <http://www.honolulu.gov/dem/>

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