The Ready Life *presents*...

THE ULTIMATE EMERGENCY WATER GUIDE

www.TheReadyLife.com

Emergency Water: The Simple Progression That Keeps Your Family Safe

Water is the first domino. When it's flowing, life feels normal. When it's gone, everything collapses fast—cooking stops, hygiene breaks down, toilets become a crisis, and stress turns into panic. And the scary part is how quickly it happens: one power outage, one broken pump, one frozen line, one contamination event… and suddenly your family is scrambling.

You can go a long time without a lot of things. But you can't go long without clean water.

That's why we start here. Not with gear obsession. Not with a massive checklist. With a simple progression that gets you covered quickly, then shows you exactly what to do next based on where you live and what you already have.

This workbook exists for one reason: to help you take action this week without overwhelm. You don't need a perfect system. You need a system that works for your life—right now. Because once your water plan is solid, everything else gets easier.

Your job today:

- Find your place in the progression
- Identify your next step
- Take that step in the next 24 hours

PART 1

WATER STORAGE

You can't store water until you know how much water you use in a day.

Step 1: Know Your Number

Minimum: **1 gallon per person per day**
Better: **2 gallons per person per day** (adds margin for basic hygiene)

Important note:
This is for clean potable water (drinking + cooking). Toilet flushing water does NOT have to be clean. We call that utility water.

Your Water Storage Calculator

Number of people in my household: _____

Choose your daily rate (check one):

☐ 1 gallon/person per day

☐ 2 gallons/person per day

My daily household water number:
_____ people × _____ gallons = _____ gallons per day

Now choose your minimum storage goal: We recommend - 14 days (minimum)

My minimum water storage goal:
_____ gallons/day × _____ days = _____ gallons stored

Example:
Family of 4, minimum plan:
4 people × 1 gallon/day × 14 days = **56 gallons**

PART 2

STORAGE OPTIONS

How are you going to store your water?

Step 1: Choose Your Target

You might want to adjust your water target based on personal factors— such as storage space, personal needs, etc. So based on the number above, decide what your personal water storage target is.

My total stored-water target (from Part 1): _____ gallons

Step 2: Pick Your Storage

You don't need one perfect container. You need enough total gallons — stored in a way that fits your space and budget. Below are common options. Circle all that would work for your situation.

A) Bottled water (individual bottles / cases)

- Pros: fastest, ready-to-drink, portable
- Notes: rotate every 6–12 months, store cool/dark

B) 1-gallon jugs (store-bought water jugs)

- Pros: simple, durable, easy to pour
- Notes: store cool/dark, rotate

C) 5-gallon dispenser jugs (water cooler jugs)

- Pros: thick plastic, good upgrade, manageable size
- Notes: ideally prefilled/sealed; consider a rack

D) 5-gallon food-grade buckets (utility water)

- Pros: cheap/free sometimes, good for toilets/cleanup
- Notes: best for utility water; harder to seal/dispense

E) 55-gallon food-grade drum (deep reserve)

- Pros: big water in small footprint, cost-effective
- Notes: heavy, needs pump/siphon; filter before drinking

F) Other (write yours)

_____

_____

Step 3: Identify "Hidden Water" Options

You may already have emergency water stored in your home—you just haven't been thinking of it that way. Two common "hidden reserves" are your **bathtub** and your **hot water heater**. If you have a **tank-style** water heater (not tankless), you may already be sitting on **30–50 gallons** of usable water. And if you have any warning—bad weather moving in or a planned outage—filling the bathtub gives you a quick supply of **utility water** for things like flushing toilets and basic handwashing.

Bathtub (if you have warning)

Good for:

- Toilet flushing
- Handwashing
- Utility use

Drinking:

- Filter it before you drink it

Tank Water Heater (huge backup source)

If you have a standard tank water heater, you may have:
30–50 gallons sitting there right now.

My home has a tank water heater: YES / NO
Estimated gallons: _____

Notes:

Step 4: Build Your Water Storage Plan

Now we're turning ideas into a real plan. Choose what fits your space and budget.

Start with what you may already have:

- Tank-style water heater: write the capacity (often 30–50 gallons).
- Bathtub (only if you'd have warning)

Then pick the containers you want to rely on for your dedicated storage:

- Bottled water in cases
- 1-gallon jugs
- 5-gallon dispenser jugs
- Food-grade buckets
- 55-gallon drum

Your goal is simple: hit your target number of gallons with storage you can actually maintain and access.

My Water Storage Plan Table

You're aiming to hit your target: _____ gallons

1. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____
2. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____
3. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____
4. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____
5. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____
6. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____
7. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____
8. Option / Container Type:
   _____
   Gallons per container: _____
   How many containers: _____
   Total gallons: _____

Step 5: Label What's Potable vs Utility

Potable water is for drinking and cooking. Utility water is for toilets/cleanup/ handwashing. Prioritize your potable water first.

Gallons planned as POTABLE: _____
Gallons planned as UTILITY: _____

Notes:

PART 3

WHERE DO I STORE IT?

Where are you going to store your water so it will keep long term?

Before you go and purchase your water, make sure you have the space to store it. Some common options would be in a closet, a corner in your garage, or in a basement.

The 4 Rules

1. Keep it out of direct sunlight
2. Keep it as cool as you reasonably can
3. Store containers full (less air space = fewer problems)
4. Think about freezing (and whether your container can handle it)

My water storage location today: _____

Is it cool? YES / NO

Is it dark? YES / NO

Is it protected from freezing? YES / NO

Are containers full? YES / NO

One improvement I can make today: _____

PART 4

WATER PURIFICATION

Where your water storage runs out... purification steps in.

Storage buys time. Purification buys you more freedom. So lets start with your first goal in this category: Have at least one reliable way to make questionable water safer WITHOUT needing the grid.

The purification ladder

Level 1: Boiling (back-against-the-wall method)

What it does
- Kills disease-causing organisms (viruses, bacteria, parasites).
- But it does NOT remove chemicals (fuel, pesticides, heavy metals, etc.).

Step-by-step
1. Pre-filter if the water is cloudy. If water is cloudy or has debris, first: Filter it through a clean cloth, or paper towel, or a coffee filter. Let it settle, then pour off the clearest water.

2. Bring it to a rolling boil.

3. Boil time depends on your altitude:
   - at or below 6,500 ft elevation: boil 1 minute.
   - above 6,500 ft elevation: boil 3 minutes

4. Cool + store safely - Let the water cool. Store in clean, sanitized containers with tight covers.

Notes:
- Boiling is fuel-intensive, so it's best as a "back-against-the-wall" method or a short-term bridge.
- Boiled water can taste "flat." You can improve taste by pouring it back and forth between containers to aerate the water and letting it stand, or adding a tiny pinch of salt per quart.

Level 2: Bleach (in a pinch option)

What bleach to use

- Regular, unscented liquid chlorine bleach
- Do not use bleach that is "splashless," has scents, is color-safe, or has added cleaners. What you need is a colorless, fragrance-free, no bells or whistles bleach.
- Standard household bleach is usually 5%–9% sodium hypochlorite. Use the doses in this workbook only for bleach in that range. Do not use concentrated bleach unless you have the correct dosing instructions for its strength—because the amount needed would be much smaller.

Step-by-step:

1. If water is cloudy let it settle or filter it through a paper towel or coffee filter.

2. Clean your storage container.
   - Use a bleach cleaning solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach to 1 quart of water to clean out and disinfect any container you plan to put your potable water in.

3. Fill your container with water and then add the bleach for purifying the water.
   - 1 gallon: use 1/8th of a teaspoon (or about 12-15 drops)
   - 5 gallons: use 1/2 teaspoon (or about 40 drops)
   - 10 gallons: use 1 teaspoon
   - If after straining your water and letting it sit, the water is still not clear, then double the dose of bleach per gallon.

4. Stir well.

5. Let it rest for about 30 minutes.

6. The water should have a slight chlorine smell. If it doesn't, repeat the dose and wait another 15 minutes.

Here is the link to the CDC with all of this information: https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/index.html

My plan:
Do I have unscented bleach? YES / NO
Where is it stored? _____

Level 3: Water Filters (best option)

While boiling water or adding bleach can work in a pinch, a non-electric filter is what turns "emergency water" into a plan you can easily and sustainably repeat day after day. It doesn't require fuel or electricity to function, it doesn't take a lot of extra work, and eliminates stress. The bottom line is that a good filter keeps you from gambling your family's health on "maybe the water is fine."

OPTION A: DISPOSABLE 'PERSONAL-STRAW' WATER FILTERS

Small and disposable water filters that you 'drink through', are great for storing in a glove box of your car, or a medical kit, or a small go-bag. They are relatively inexpensive, so anyone can have one tucked in a purse or backpack. It's one of the fastest ways to go from "I have questionable water" to "I can drink right now."

Best for:

- Last-ditch emergencies
- Bug-out bag / vehicle kit
- Day hikes, hunting, travel
- People who need a cheap starting point today
- Very small and lightweight
- Cheap
- No electricity
- Simple (no setup, no tools)
- Comes as a Water Bottle style also
- For personal drinking only

Limitations:

- It's a personal filter — not great for supplying a whole family every day
- You typically have to drink right from the source (or from a bottle), which is less convenient than a gravity system
- Most straw-style filters are designed for biological threats (bacteria/parasites), but not chemicals
- Virus protection varies by model—don't assume it unless your model specifically says so
- Can't use this filtration method for cooking

Recommendations:

1. LifeStraw
2. LifeStraw Water Bottle

OPTION B: BACKPACKING FILTERS (PUMP OR GRAVITY)

These are your "field filter" options that are often used for camping or backpacking. There are two standard types, a pump or a simple gravity purification option. These kinds of filters are perfect for small spaces.

Best for:

- Apartments or urban families who need something compact
- Bug-out bags or small vehicle kits
- Great for filtering creek, river, or lake water on the go
- Fast response when you don't have time to set up a big system

Pump filter: You have another container that you pump the water out of and as it pumps, it filters and you place it into a clean drinking container. Its great when you need water urgently, one container at a time.

Gravity filter: You hang a dirty-water bag up above and gravity pushes water through a filter and into a clean bag below. This works great for groups and camps because you can filter a larger quantity, hands off, while you do other tasks.

Notes:

- These filters can eventually get clogged. Some come with scrubbers or cleaners to remove the larger debris. Filters do not last forever, but they usually filter a LOT of water before needing to be replaced (300-500 gallons depending on the filter).
- Be sure your water container is clean before adding filtered water to drink.

Recommendations:

1. MSR Backcountry Pump Filter (low cost, backpacking filter)
2. MSR Gardian Pump Filter (For emergencies/dirty water situations)
3. MSR Gardian Gravity Flow Filter (For emergencies/dirty water situations)

OPTION C: COUNTERTOP GRAVITY FILTERS

These are your "family kitchen" options that can be used on an ongoing basis. Filters larger quantities, and give you more comfort at home. They are not a mobile friendly option, and also take up more space. And you still need a plan for collecting and hauling water.

Best for:

- Long-term grid-down filtering at home
- Filtering larger amounts each day
- Families who want a consistent daily routine (fill, drip, use)
- Why people like them
- No electricity
- Filters a lot of water with minimal effort
- Makes it easy to keep a steady supply of drinking water

Recommendations:

1. Berkey Countertop Water Filter

WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU GET?

Check the one that matches you best:

I want something compact and versatile (car kit, bug-out, travel)

☐ Life straw

☐ backpacking gravity or pump filter

I want a home base "daily drinking water" solution (family routine)

☐ Countertop gravity filter

I want the strongest plan

☐ Backpacking filter for mobility + Countertop filter for home base

PART 5

LONGER-TERM WATER INDEPENDENCE

Long term goals lead to long term independence.

Once you have **two weeks of stored water** and a reliable **non-electric way to purify more**, you're no longer fragile. From there, the next upgrade is simple: **secure a water source you control—and a way to access it when the grid is down.** This step is mainly for those with property, but even small upgrades (like larger storage) can make a huge difference. Here are a few options:

Pick your next upgrade (circle one):

A) **Large storage (cistern)**

- Add serious reserve with a larger tank (above-ground or buried). Even a few hundred gallons changes everything.
  My next step: _____

B) **Well backup: hand pump**

- If you have a well, a hand pump gives you a manual "no-grid" way to get water.
  My next step: _____

C) **Well backup: generator**

- Power your existing electric pump with a generator you can fuel and maintain.
  My next step: _____

D) **Ultimate: solar/off-grid power**

- An off-grid solar power system can run your pump and other essentials long-term.
  My next step: _____

The Ready Life Academy resources for long term independence—

Inside The Ready Life Academy, we have:

- A **Hand Pump** course
- An **Off-Grid Power** course
- Training on **selecting and sizing a generator**
- Practical examples of **large cistern setups** (including our 1700-gallon cistern)

My one upgrade goal (next 6 months): _____

Notes:

PART 5

FINAL STEP: YOUR 24 HOUR ASSESSMENT

Now lets turn dreams into reality.

You're not allowed to leave this week with "good intentions." It's time to make some REAL progress toward your independence. So take your next step starting wherever you are currently at.

Your "Next Step" (Circle One)

You can come back and fill this in after you've gone through the workbook. This is for your reference afterwards.

2. I do NOT have two weeks of stored water.
   → Your next step is: **Water Storage**

3. I DO have two weeks of stored water, but I don't have a reliable non-electric way to purify water.
   → Your next step is: **Water Purification**

4. I DO have two weeks of stored water AND a non-electric purification method.
   → Your next step is: **Longer-Term Independence (based on where I live)**

My next step for the next 24 hours is:

_____

The one thing I will do by tomorrow is:

_____

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nick & Lisa Meissner — We live deep in the mountains of Idaho with our young family, and we've learned this the hard way: it's dangerous to depend on corporations or government systems for your basics —water, heat, food, and power.

As Christians, we also believe the days are coming when that dependence will be used to control who can buy, sell, and survive. That's why we built The Ready Life: to help families become resilient and self-reliant, so you're not at the mercy of "the system" when it falters—and so you're strong enough to help others when they're in need.