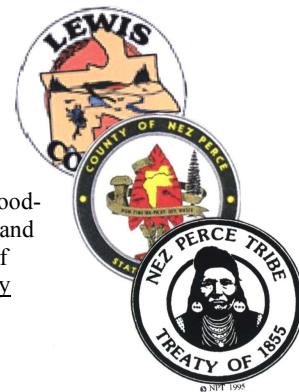
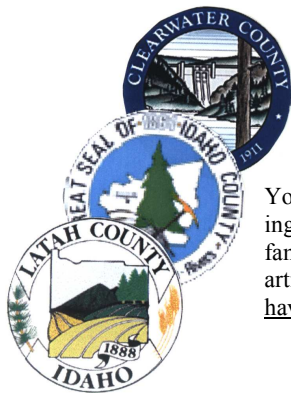


Get Pandemic Ready



Your Office of Emergency Management plans and prepares for disasters, ranging from localized flooding to worldwide events. Preparation includes local government, the private sector and individuals and families. Pandemic flu is a rapidly emerging threat affecting all of us. The purpose of this series of articles is to inform citizens of what they can do to protect themselves. We recommend each family have three months of food, water, medications, and other supplies on-hand.

Issue 6: Water

1. **The Problem.** Water is our most essential nutrient. People can survive days, weeks or months without food, but only about four days without water. The body uses water for digestion, absorption, circulation, transporting nutrients, building tissue, carrying away waste and maintaining body temperature.

The great majority of households in our region have water provided and treated by plants providing clean, non-contaminated drinking water. In the event of a pandemic, essential services, such as water treatment may be interrupted for several reasons:

- Illness or absenteeism of plant employees
- Lack of electricity to run the plants
- Lack of chlorine product needed to treat the water because it could not be delivered (drivers are ill and not driving the trucks)

2. **The Solution.** Plan on having 2-3 gallons of water per person PER DAY on hand (and don't forget your pets). Water will be needed for: drinking, cooking, cleaning, bathing and sanitation. One gallon of water weighs about 8½ pounds. So, how do you store enough water?

- Start NOW. If you use bottled water, get extra when you shop. Food grade plastic or glass containers are suitable for storing water. Thoroughly rinse and clean your containers and fill them up. Tap water is fine, unless there are restrictions from the health district. Clearly label all drinking water containers "drinking water" with the current date. Store the water in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight and heat sources. What to avoid:
 - Do not use empty milk jugs. Bacteria in milk can become lodged in the plastic of the jug. Additionally, the plastic is too thin to last more than a few months before breaking.
 - Do not store your water near gasoline, kerosene, pesticides or similar substances.
- If you have a pool, you have a water source. Water in swimming pools is chlorinated, but it also contains chemicals that can make it unsafe to drink. Therefore, the EPA does not recommend drinking it. This water can be used for other purposes, such as cleaning, bathing and sanitation.
- Water storage containers come in many shapes and sizes. You can purchase new 5-6 gallon plastic containers designed for water. If you have the room, consider purchasing used 55-gallon plastic drums from bottling companies. If they were used for syrup concentrate, they are food grade, and can be cleaned and used for water storage. Also consider the small kiddie pools with the flexible fold down sides that hold several hundred gallons of water. Keep it folded in it's original box, until it is needed.

Continued...

3. **Later on**.... Consider the possibility of needing more water, after your stored water is used up. If you need to find water outside your home, you can use these sources. Be sure to treat the water first.

- Rainwater
- Streams and rivers
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

You will need to purify this water.

4. **Water Purification How-to**

STEP 1: Preliminary cleaning (for dirty or cloudy water)

- Let water sit in containers for a day to allow solid materials to settle. Siphon water from the center and middle of the container.
- Put this water through several layers of coffee filters or clean cloth.

STEP 2: Treat the water using any of these:

- Water purifiers and filters. Consider existing in-house water filters, especially those that come with their own pitcher. Caution: make sure the filter removes microorganisms, not just chemical taste. Small personal and family-sized filters are available in camping supply stores and on the internet.
- Chemical treatment. The American Red Cross recommends 8 drops of **unscented** bleach to each 2-liter bottle of clear water and 16 drops per gallon. Shake and let stand for 30 minutes. There should be a slight chlorine odor. If not, repeat the treatment.
- Boiling. Boil water for 12 minutes at a rolling boil (NOT simmering). This method is listed last because it uses heat energy, which may be scarce.

STEP 3: Taste enhancement

- Before boiling water, add a pinch of salt.
- For boiled or chemically-treated water, aerate the water by pouring it from one container to another several times.

Additional Sources:

- <http://epa.gov/safewater/faq/emerg.html>: Emergency disinfection of drinking water
- <http://eps.gov/OGWDW>: EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
- <http://athagan.members.atlantic.net/index.html>: Very thorough water FAQ for advanced preppers
- <http://emergencyhomepreparation.org>: excellent prepping information

Contact #'s

Clearwater County

Emergency Management
476-4064

Idaho County

Emergency Management
983-3074

Latah County

Disaster Services
883-2265

Lewis County

Emergency Management
937-2380

Nez Perce County

Emergency Management
799-3084

Nez Perce Tribe

ERWM
843-7375 ext. 2377

For more information, or to participate in local pandemic flu planning, contact your local Emergency Manager.