

FREE GUIDE • WATER

Water Filter Chooser and Boil-Advisory Card

Which filter fits your house, and what to do the day the water company says boil.

Hey, I'm Randall. I'm a former Marine Combat Engineer, and my wife, Robbie, is a registered nurse. It is easy to buy a water filter before you know what problem you are solving. This sheet fixes that order. Fill in your situation first, then pick. Pencil is fine.

Affiliate Disclosure

Nothing in this PDF is a store link and it has no prices. Some Fortified Living pages it points to may carry affiliate links, and if you buy through them Fortified Living may earn a commission at no extra cost to you. As an Amazon Associate I earn from qualifying purchases. Any gear named here is a category idea or catalog-based, not a hands-on test or an agency endorsement. You can finish every worksheet without buying anything.

Filter, Boil or Bleach: What Each One Does

Know the difference before you buy

Boiling kills bacteria, viruses and parasites. EPA: bring water to a rolling boil for at least one minute; above 5,000 feet, boil for three minutes. Ready.gov calls boiling the safest method. [S1][S2]

Disinfecting with plain, unscented household bleach is the backup when you cannot boil. Follow the EPA steps for your bottle's strength; our water guide prints them. [S1]

A portable filter traps bacteria and parasites if its pores are small enough (the CDC says an absolute pore size of 0.3 micron or smaller for bacteria). Portable filters like these do not trap viruses. A filter backs up boiling or bleach; it does not replace them when viruses are a concern. [S3]

A home carbon filter certified only to NSF/ANSI 42 is certified for taste, odor and chlorine, not germs. Check which NSF/ANSI standards the maker lists, and what those standards cover.

Worksheet A: Our Water Situation

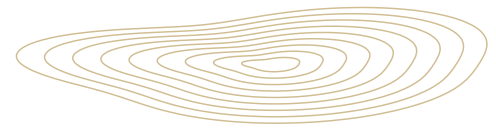
- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ We are on city water | ☐ We are on a private well |
| ☐ Our water needs power to run (well pump, softener) | ☐ We lose power more than once a year |
| ☐ Every adult has a go-bag that needs a filter | ☐ We have small children or someone who is sick |
| ☐ Our everyday tap water tastes bad | ☐ We have had a boil water notice before |

People In Our House:

Pets:

Water Company Phone Number:





STEP 2

Pick by Situation

Find your row. Each pick is explained, with its honest downsides, on the website version of this sheet. This PDF has no store links and no prices.

- **Go-bag, car, every adult:** Small portable filter; boil or disinfect when viruses are a worry. Our pick: Sawyer Mini, or LifeStraw Personal for a kid's bag.
- **Whole family filtering together:** Two pouches and gravity tubing; flows faster than the Mini. Our pick: Sawyer Squeeze.
- **Storm is coming, water still on:** Store water now; a tub liner holds a lot. Our pick: WaterBOB bathtub storage.
- **Home base, no power:** Gravity filter for taste and chlorine; boil or disinfect questionable water first. Our pick: Waterdrop King Tank.
- **Home, power on, tap tastes bad:** Countertop filter certified to NSF standards. Our pick: AquaTru Classic.

- ☐ We chose our go-bag filter
- ☐ We chose our home water plan
- ☐ We stored water before buying anything else

What We Chose, And Where It Is Kept:

Filter Replace Or Backwash Date:

Worksheet B: Our Water Backup Line

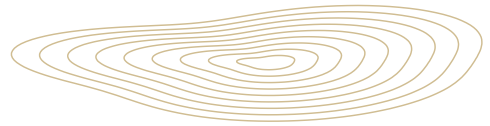
Ready.gov says to store at least one gallon of water per person per day for several days. The Red Cross plans 3 days if you must leave and 2 weeks if you can stay home. [S2][S4]

Days:	People:	Gallons (people X Days):	Gallons We Have:	Where It Is Stored:

Date We Filled Or Bought It:

Swap Date (homemade-filled Water: Every 6 Months):





CUT OUT AND TAPE TO THE FRIDGE

Boil-Advisory Card

When the water company says boil

1. Read the notice from your water company and follow it. It overrides this card.
2. Use bottled water, or water you boiled, for drinking, cooking, making drinks, washing dishes and brushing teeth. [S1]
3. Ready.gov adds washing or preparing food and making ice to that list. [S2]
4. Boil: rolling boil for at least one minute (three minutes above 5,000 feet). Let it cool on its own. Store it in clean, covered containers. [S1]
5. Cloudy water: let it settle and filter it through a clean cloth, paper towel or coffee filter first. [S1]
6. If you cannot boil, disinfect with plain bleach using the EPA steps. A portable filter alone does not handle viruses. [S1][S3]

Water Company Phone:

Where We Hear Notices (text Alert, Radio, Website):

Our Boiling Pot And Where The Lid Is:

Bleach Bottle Date (replace After A Year):

Gear for This Plan: Our Picks

- **Go-bag:** Sawyer Mini or LifeStraw Personal.
- **Family filtering:** Sawyer Squeeze.
- **Storm storage:** WaterBOB.
- **Home, no power:** Waterdrop King Tank (taste and chlorine; not for viruses, bacteria or parasites).
- **Home, power on:** AquaTru Classic.

Read more on our site • The picks, with the tradeoffs:

[Water Filter Chooser: Gear for This Plan](#)

Read more on our site • Store it, make it safe, filter it:

[Emergency Water for Your Family](#)

Sources

[S1] EPA: Emergency Disinfection of Drinking Water. Read 10/11/2026.

[S2] Ready.gov (FEMA): Water. Read 10/11/2026.

[S3] CDC: How to Make Water Safe in an Emergency, as cited in our Emergency Water guide.

[S4] American Red Cross: Survival Kit Supplies, as cited in our Emergency Water guide.

General preparedness information, not medical advice. Follow your water company and local health officials.

