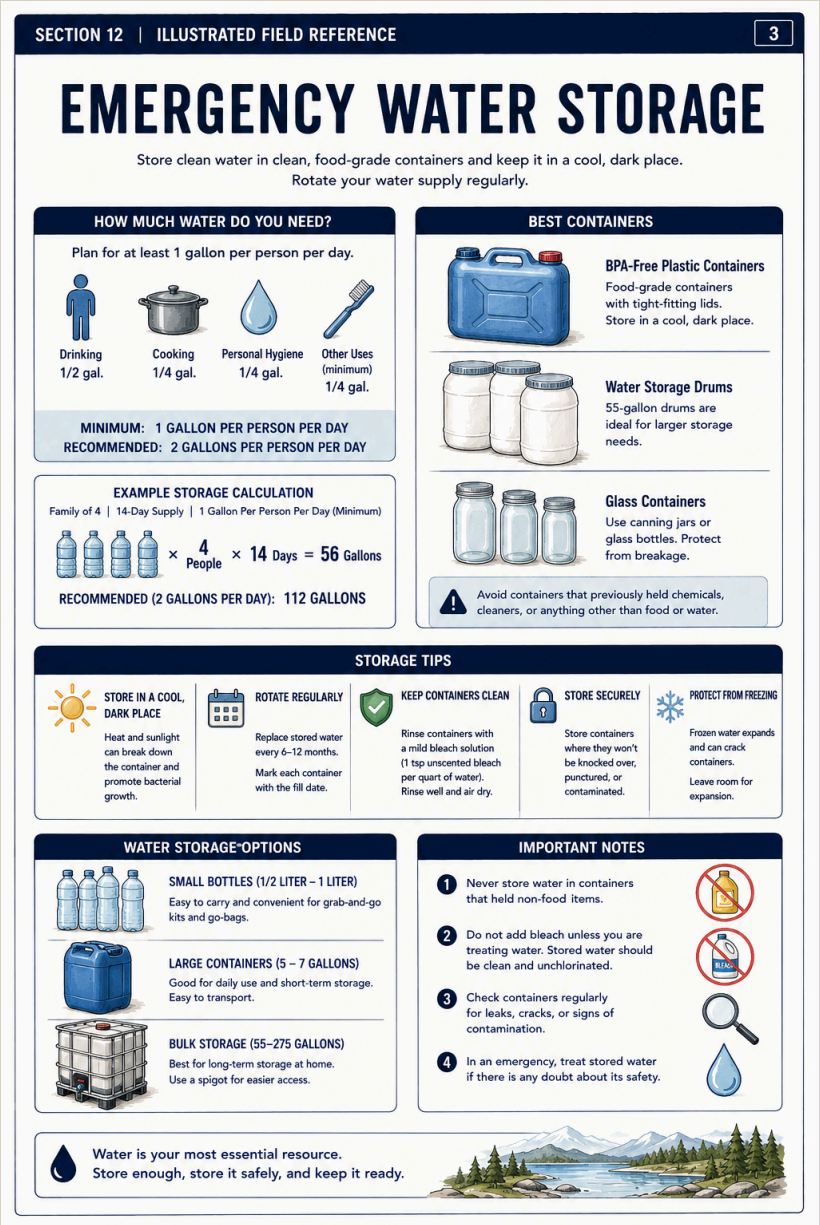
FIELD GUIDE · NO. 03

Emergency Water Storage

Treated water stays safe only if the container — and the habits around it — stay clean.



FROM THE BOOK

1. Finding and treating water is only part of the job. Many cases of unsafe drinking water begin with poor storage, not poor treatment.
2. Start with clean containers. Bottles previously used for other beverages should be washed thoroughly. Containers made for drinking water are generally the best choice.
3. Keep untreated and treated water in separate, clearly marked containers. Mixing the two, even accidentally, undoes the work you have already done.
4. When filling a container, avoid touching the inside of the cap or opening with dirty hands. Wipe your hands or use sanitizer before handling clean containers when you can.
5. For home emergency storage, use food-grade or purpose-made containers, cleaned thoroughly, and store them in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. A basement, interior closet, or climate-controlled room is usually better than a garage that gets very hot or freezes.
6. Inspect stored water occasionally for leaks, damage, or signs of contamination, and rotate supplies on a regular schedule. Replace water used from a go-bag or vehicle kit as soon as you return home. In freezing weather, keep bottles from sitting exposed for long periods; in hot weather, keep water out of direct sun.

PRACTICE IT

Label two containers "treated" and "untreated," inspect your emergency water stores, and put a reminder on your calendar to rotate and check them on a regular schedule.