

# Emergency Water Filtration Solutions



Getting clean, safe water to drink didn't always used to be so easy. There was a time when people boiled absolutely every drop of water they used to drink and cook with. Even then, they would sometimes get sick. Water borne illnesses are particularly nasty and when consumed, wreak havoc on our systems. Cholera, botulism, and dysentery are just a few of the [diseases](#) that plagued humans for hundreds of years before modern plumbing and bacteria came along. There are still many places on the planet today where people are not guaranteed access to clean water. Thankfully, there have been some wonderful advances in recent years to help people filter the water they *do* have access to and safely drink it. In this article, we will look at several methods available out there to help you ensure you can treat and safely drink the water you find in a disaster scenario. That is when fresh, clean water is the most important.

# Portable Solutions

**Water Treatment Tabs** – A long time tried and true method of water treatment and friend of hikers and campers everywhere, [these portable little tabs](#) are lightweight and gets rid of the bacteria that may cause illness. They will change the taste of the water, which may be unpleasant for some. Personally, when it comes down to survival versus taste, I will choose survival. If you do not have a way to filter and boil your water, this is a good way to go. One bottle has enough for 50 treatments.

**Straw Filters** – Who *hasn't* seen or heard about the [Lifestraw](#) water filter? The invention has literally saved thousands of lives by enabling people in third world countries the ability to drink safe water. That is a big deal! Rated to filter up to 1,000 liters of contaminated water, these are a good option and inexpensive to boot. I have used one and while it was slow going, I was indeed able to get clean water from a stream. It was a little cumbersome to have to either lay down and put the straw in the water or have a container that you could gather the water in and then filter but again, survival versus convenience. It's kind of a no brainer.

**We have discovered** another straw filter that we prefer. A more recent model, and an upgrade to the original Lifestraw, the [Sawyer Mini](#) water filtration system. While a few bucks more, what you get in return blows the other away. This will filter up to 100,000 gallons of water. It is smaller and comes with a heavy duty plastic pouch to gather water in. The straw screws right onto it and you can simply turn it upside down and let gravity do the work. Furthermore, it comes with a cleaning plunger in case of clogging. Finally, not only is it sized to fit standard water bottles and hydration packs, it comes with a heavy duty rubber straw so you can extend your line to take a *filtered* drink while backpacking, bicycling, or just hiking around. We took advantage of the multipack deals so there was

one in our everyday carry bags, vehicle bag, hiking bags, and also as gifts. 100,000 gallons is amazing from something that fits in the palm of your hand and weighs two ounces.

**Hand Crank Water Filters** – There are several different kinds of hand held, hand cranked water filters available out there. You simply put the one of the water lines into the untreated water and the other into a clean receptacle. The crank helps to pump the water through the filter and out, ready to go. We did a lot of research and testing and ended up getting the [MSR Sweetwater Microfilter](#). The first time it was used, it filtered semi fast moving muskeg water (it had rained a lot) and it worked like a champ. That slightly brackish water came out clean and sweet indeed on the other side. Due to all the plant matter, we had to clean the filter out but thankfully, everything you need for maintenance fits right inside the little pouch it comes in.

## Home Solutions

**Bucket Filters** – For emergency water filtration on a larger scale and when you are staying in place, there are many options to meet the greater need. Several filtering buckets are available by companies like [Aquapail](#), [Lifestraw](#), and [Sawyer](#). They are gravity powered and can be moved if needed with ease.

**Pitchers** – Hundreds of thousands of people, especially in large cities, have filtering water pitchers. These are also extremely useful in a disaster or survival situation. They can be cumbersome to travel with but if you are bugging in, make sure you have extra filters! There are numerous reputable companies out there who offer a filtering water pitcher such as [Berkey](#) and [Brita](#). Other notable mentions include [Pur](#) which has very high ratings.

# DIY or “Bio Filter” Solutions

There are several different ways you can make your own water filtering system. By using gravel, sand, and activated charcoal in layers, you will be able to filter out incrementally smaller contaminants. After boiling, the water is potable and safe! With a simple Google search, I was able to find several articles that explain how and why this works. The one from [Off The Grid News.com](http://OffTheGridNews.com) was really well done.

## Final Notes

It is recommended that you thoroughly research each option to and consider the actual amount of water your family or group will need to survive without running water. Even if you are [on a low or fixed income](#), ensuring you can filter and treat water can be accomplished with one of the solutions above. Also, not all filters take out chemicals and it is wise to always boil your water if you can. Even if it has been filtered or treated. **Always** harvest your water from a fast moving source, avoid brackish or sour smelling water. Avoid any water that smells of chemicals or has oil and gas sheen on the top. Rainwater caught and contained should still be filtered, especially if your area has air pollution or you are close to a large city/population center. Better safe than sorry!

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