

The Need for Water Containers In Hospitals & Nursing Homes

The Issue: Less Water or Bad Water is a Big Problem

On any given day, it is easy to forget how instrumental water is to every facet of running a hospital or nursing home. This table, from the CDC guide [page 14](#), lists all the needs for water in a hospital or nursing home. After an emergency, water may be limited or contaminated; being prepared is critical.

<u>Patient Care Usage</u>	<u>Facility Usage</u>
1 Staff & Patient Usage Drinking fountains	1 Facility Usage Air-conditioning
2 Dietary	2 Boilers
3 Dialysis services	3 Dishwashing
4 Eye-wash stations	4 Laundry
5 Ice machines	5 Autoclaves
6 Laboratory	6 Medical equipment
7 Patient decontamination/hazmat	7 Outdoor irrigation systems
8 Patient floors	8 Fire suppression sprinkler system
9 Pharmacy	9 Vacuum pumps
10 Surgery	10 Water system flushing
11 Radiology	11 Water-cooled air compressors
12 Toilets, washrooms, showers	

Who recommends Water Preparedness for Hospitals and Nursing Homes?

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** Their guide can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/emergency/emergency-water-supply-planning-guide.pdf>
- **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services:** Their guide can be found at <http://www.phe.gov/PREPAREDNESS/PLANNING/HPP/Pages/default.aspx>

The Solution: Multiple Solutions Required

No one solution will solve all the needs for water during or after an emergency per the CDC guide above. It took 38 pages in their guide to provide a comprehensive set of solutions illustrating the magnitude and complexity of this issue. Water containers are listed as a solution in the CDC guide.

Why are Containers Needed?

The CDC guide [page 44](#) states that containers are useful, “if emergency water storage is required on individual floors of a facility, smaller containers can be used”. They further state that the container size matters as, “depending on location and intended use, containers larger than 7 gallons may not be suitable because they would be too heavy for an individual to lift”. Here are some **examples**:

- **For Drinking Water** - At a Large Academic Medical Facility on [page 65](#), here is what they said, “Bottled water was used for drinking and for limited food preparation. One-liter and 5-gallon bottles of water and ice were brought in as well.” However, “at the time of the hurricane, the hospital had a 300-gallons-per-minute (gpm) water demand.”
- **For Toilet Flushing** – At a Florida nursing home on [page 68](#), here is what they said, “As the loss of water service persisted through day one to day two, toilet flushing became a problem because each flush required a few gallons, rather than a few cups, of water, and the facility had shared bathrooms, thus preventing the option to wait longer between flushes.”
- **For Hand Washing Stations** – WaterBrick with their dispensing spigot makes an easy portable hand washing station. The interior column holes can help secure it to a station. This need came up in a question the article asked the reader on [page 75](#) question 8.
- **18 Critical Reasons for Water** are on [page 70](#) related to patient care.