

55 Gallon Water Barrel - Filling Instructions

Check CDC.gov for additional info:

[CDC: Cleaning & Preparing Personal Water Storage Containers](#)

Sanitize your barrel:

- 1) Depending on your barrel, you may need to use your [bucket wrench that doubles as a bung nut remover](#) to open your 55 Gallon Water Barrel.
- 2) Rinse out the barrel (with an [RV drinking-water safe hose](#) not a regular garden hose which contains unsafe chemicals, and can make the water taste bad)
- 3) Add a couple gallons of water and 1 Tablespoon of regular bleach (no additives or fragrances) and swish around on the entire inside of the barrel (including the top) and let sit for 1 minute
- 4) Rinse REALLY well

The barrel is then ready to fill.

Fill your barrel:

- 1) Make sure your barrel is in the location you plan to store it long-term, it will be heavy and difficult to move once full!
- 2) Put your barrel on top of a wooden sheet (do not place your barrel directly on top of cement, the cement has chemicals that leach into plastic). A 2' x 2' sheet should fit most barrels. [Particle board](#) works great.
- 3) Use your [RV drinking-water safe hose](#) to fill your barrel
- 4) Fill within a couple inches from the top (unless stored in the garage - where you need to plan for water expansion due to cold temperatures - water expands about 10% when frozen - so fill to about a tenth of the way from the top)
- 5) Add 1 bottle of [water treatment drops](#). (1 bottle for each 55 gallon barrel.)
- 6) Put the cap back on your barrel securely.
- 7) Stick on some tape as your label (write on with a sharpie marker). Include the date, and also the date in 5 years when the water needs to be changed. (The water treatment drops will allow you to go up to 5 years before rotating.)
- 8) Consider putting a copy of these directions with your water barrel so they'll be handy when it's time to rotate your water. Voila! Water storage :)

Pro-Tip: Make sure your hose is long enough to reach the location you will be storing your barrel - measure the distance from your hose water faucet to where the barrel will be stored long-term. If you need to purchase two hoses and connect them we recommend the [World's Best Garden Hose Quick Connect](#) - when you're not filling barrels it's nifty for attaching your favorite water sprayer nozzle as well :)

Pro-Tip: Use an air compressor to push out any extra water from the hose once you're done. (As long as the air compressor hasn't been used for any projects where it may have sucked in chemicals.) Also ensure there are no kinks in the hose so it can finish air drying completely. This will prevent mildew and is best practice for storing the hose for its next use.