Learning from Tropical Storm Isaias

By Joseph Parish

Preppers credit every disastrous incident with a learning experience. My wife and I ordinarily analysis the situations we had experienced, and derive lessons learned from the data gather. This is how we come to the realization as to where our weak points are. This past Tuesday we experienced tropical storm Isaias passing through the state of Delaware. As a result of this storm, we lost electricity for most of the day. Upon sitting down in the aftermath of the events, we recognized that even though we had our own well, and do not need to rely upon the community water supply, we still have a water availability issue.

We quickly discovered that it does not take long for the stored-up water to deplete its reserve supply. Our pump is a 120 Volt AC driven unit, and without electricity we have no water. Therefore, one of our long-range plans is to install a 12- or 24-volt DC pump on our well, feeding it from solar power. This should supply us with the water we need when we have no electricity.

Being a survivalist by nature, I believe in back-up systems being in place. With our water issues, I plan to employee two 55-gallon hard plastic food-grade drums for extra water storage. This will provide a 110-gallon back-up. Additionally, we have a rack which holds two five-gallon water containers, these are the type of containers which can be purchased from the local grocery stores. My plan is to purchase several of the pre-filled bottles, and mount them onto the rack, just in case. I already have a pump for both the

55 gallon, and the five-gallon containers, so that makes it a simple procedure to get the water from them.

Finally, my third backup system will be several cases of commercially bottled drinking water that can be purchased from the grocery stores. I generally do not like using these flimsy lightweight plastic bottles as they leach chemicals into the water, and they eventually start to leak. Of course, the end justifies the means, and the key here is to be prepared.

For those who are following my recommendations, I will be storing at least one gallon of water for one person for a three-day period. This is the suggested amount dictated by FEMA. I shall store enough of the bottled water to last my wife, and me for an extended two-week period.

I do not usually put much faith in expiration dates on products as manufacturers like to see you throw away an outdated product, and buy a fresh one from them, however, as I mentioned above leaching does take place with these bottles, so in the interest of safety, I suggest paying attention to the expiration dates posted on the water bottles.

If you are storing your own water in containers, you might want to replace it every six months. Another hint to keep in mind is to store a bottle of unscented liquid household chlorine bleach. The label on the container should state that it contains between 5–6% sodium hypochlorite. This bleach can be used to disinfect your non-commercial water. Again, pay attention to the expiration date on the bleach bottle, and replace it accordingly.

Always use food-grade containers to store your water in, and never those that were used for toxic chemicals. Narrow neck containers are best for allowing easy pouring of

the water. You will need to properly clean and sanitize the container prior to putting water into it. Start by mixing a bleach solution of 1 teaspoon of unscented chlorine bleach to one quart of water. Close the container tightly and shake well. The bleach should touch ever spot inside the container. Wait for 30 seconds, and then pour the solution out. Let the container air dry before you fill it with fresh, clean water. Place a label on the water container saying drinkable water and the date you stored it.

You are now set for any emergency, and you can feel confident in having a safe water supply at hand. The moral of this tale is to learn from your mistakes, I did.