

# Sourcing Commercial Bottled Water on Deployment

## Official Languages

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## Advisory

1. The topic of bottled water on deployment is raised periodically. The following is DFHP's recommended approach to the subject.
2. **Sourcing commercial bottled water.** Commercial bottled water should be sourced to comply with any one of the following standards:
  - a. Produced in Canada, the United States, Western and some countries in Northern Europe<sup>1</sup>, Japan, Australia or New Zealand; or
  - b. Has a current approval by the US Army Public Health Command. Approved products by world region are available at [Worldwide Directory of Sanitarily Approved Food Establishments for Armed Forces Procurement \(english only\)](#); or
  - c. NSF International certified. Certified brands of bottled water can be found using the search engine available at the NSF [Public Health and Safety Organization website \(english only\)](#).
3. **Unapproved bottled water.** Commercial bottled water locally procured in deployed settings that do not meet these standards should be considered a raw untreated water source and should not be consumed prior to treatment by either boiling or chemical disinfection [using purification tablets (such as Micropur tablets) IAW label recommendations]. To improve the taste of commercially produced bottled water treated with purification tablets, CAF members may add juice crystals such as those provided in the individual meal packs (IMP) **after** the water has been treated. Caffeinated juice crystals should be consumed in moderation. Also, the use of flavouring products with

natural sugars may require more frequent cleaning of personal hydration bladders, to prevent bacterial overgrowth, and teeth, to prevent dental caries.

4. **Storage of bottled water.** Bottled water should preferably be stored upright in shaded, well-ventilated areas protected from the natural environment. All efforts must be made to store commercial bottled water away from direct sunlight because the light and warmth may support bacterial regrowth in the water as well as causing the water to have a “plastic” taste. In any event, the taste of bottled water may be improved by cooling it whenever possible or by adding juice crystals as stated above. Bottled water should be stored and distributed on a first in, first out basis, keeping the holding time as short as possible.
5. **Commercial bottled water shelf life.** Commercial bottled water sometimes has a labeled shelf life or best before date of 1 year or longer. In such cases, and if necessary, commercial bottled water may continue to be stored and issued indefinitely beyond its shelf-life expiration date, in 30-day increments, by CF H Svcs assets (PMed Tech, PA) after examination and testing of representative bottles in the expiring or expired lots, and subsequent approval of the shelf life extension.
6. **Testing of bottled water.** To evaluate the water quality of commercial bottled water, qualified personnel<sup>2</sup> should perform visual and physical assessment of the bottles in question, and/or test the product on sight or collect samples for laboratory testing. The requirement and frequency of water quality testing should be in line with the onsite vulnerability assessment of the commercial bottled water lot. If the water in any of the bottles is cloudy, tampering is suspected, or coliform (or other pathogenic organism) positive samples are identified, the nearest CF H Svcs asset (PMed Tech or PA) or CAF water engineering asset should be notified immediately, and the suspicious production lot placed on hold pending investigation. In addition, immediate resampling to confirm coliform presence should occur. In the case of coliform-positive samples, a representative sample from the suspect lot should be retested. If the confirmation results indicate the presence of coliforms, the lot should not be used for potable purposes, with the following exception: if no other sources of drinking water are available, bottled water lots that have tested positive for coliforms may be issued for drinking, provided that the bottled water is treated by boiling or with purification tablets as stated above.
7. **Enquiries.** Enquiries related to this policy are to be submitted to D FHP by e-mail at: +DFHP Inquiries@CMP DGHS@Ottawa-Hull (intranet/DWAN) or DFHP-DPSF@forces.gc.ca (internet).

## Footnotes

[1] This means: Belgium, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands and Switzerland for Western Europe. The countries to which this applies in Northern Europe are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

[2] Qualified personnel include deployed CF H Svcs assets (PMed Tech or PA) or CAF water engineering assets or allied military medical/public health/water engineering assets/