

## Super Saver: Cleaning Used 55 Gallon Drums



- Used 55 Gallon Drum
- Bung Wrench
- 1 Cup Unscented Bleach
- Hose
- High Pressure Valve Attachment if Available

One of the common complaints about emergency preparedness is this – “It’s just too expensive”. And while my first reaction is to say, “When you’re starving and cold you’ll be willing to sell everything you have for some freeze dried lasagna and a wool blanket”, I do understand the monetary constraints many preppers have on their emergency preparedness budget. Especially in this economy.

Water storage in particular can be very pricey very fast. Considering you need a minimum of a gallon per person per day (2 gallons is optimal) that is a lot of water storage containers to purchase. 55 gallon drums are at a phenomenal price of \$69 bucks on average. And with two people to supply water for – that means you need 13 55 gallon drums plus an additional 15 gallons stored in something else. That means you’re looking at nearly a \$900 investment. OUCH!

But have hope my friends! Normally if you look around enough, suppliers of different sorts will get their product in 55 gallon drums and are looking to sell them to the first buyer for around \$7-\$15 each! So now, what would’ve cost you \$900 is only going to cost \$195. That’s 78% off your water storage! It’s like Black Friday came early.

The only down side to buying used 55 gallon drums is the cleaning you’ll have to do to make them safe for water storage. Personally – I find that kind of savings more than worth the time it takes to clean them.

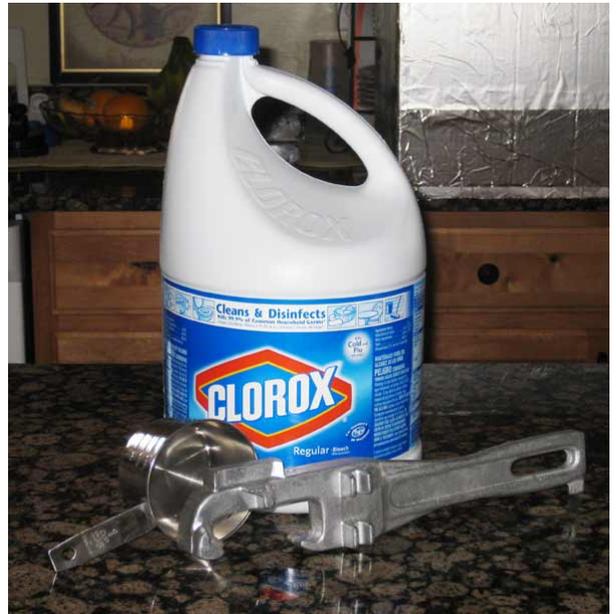
I personally, just bought 7 used 55 gallon drums containing vanilla extract and peppermint. So let’s go through the steps of cleaning your drums.

## Step 1: Spray Down & Rinse Out

Depending on what was previously stored in your 55 gallon drum, you may have the ingredients all over the inside and outside of the drum. You want to clear off all of the residual ingredients so when you fill in your water you don't contaminate it. Also, fill up the inside with about 5 gallons of water and swish it around for a couple of minutes. You want to get most of the easy gunk out so the bleach can break down the tough stuff.

After swishing it around for about 3 or 4 minutes, dump it out. If you had remaining ingredients in the drum, make sure the water isn't coming out clear. If it is, swish it around a little longer to break up the ingredients.

Once the inside of your drum is clean, rinse off your bung and the threads around the hole to get any ingredients off of them as well.



## Step 2: Disinfect with Bleach

Fill up your bucket 1/4-1/3 of the way with water. Add 1 Cup of bleach. Secure bung with your bung wrench so your can toss this thing around without the water spilling out. Aggressively shake your drum for 5-10 minutes. Hold it upright and shake it back and forth. Put it on it's side and roll it around. Do whatever you have to to make the water violently hit every square inch of your drum.

## Step 3: Dump, Test and Repeat if Necessary

Unscrew your bung and check your drum. Come up with some sort of test to determine if the ingredients have been removed. For example – some of mine contained vanilla. So I would check the side walls to see if there was any visual remnants of the vanilla and I would smell inside of the drum to see if I could still pick up the vanilla scent. If I could only smell the bleach I called it good. If I smelled the vanilla I repeated Step 2.

Once you've cleared your drum as 'good to go', drain it.

## Step 4: Rinse

If you have a high pressure valve attachment for your hose screw it on. If not, get ready to use the old thumb to create a high pressure rinse. Spray out the inside of the drum thoroughly. Once it's rinsed, drain it.

Replace your bung and spray off the outside of the drum.

So that's it folks! You are now \$705 richer from using used 55 gallon drums versus new ones. Never forget – emergency preparedness and frugality CAN coexist. So get to swishing and happy prepping!

## Supplies:

- Used 55 Gallon Drum
- Bung Wrench
- 1 Cup Unscented Bleach
- Hose

High Pressure Valve Attachment if Available

**Process:**

Spray down the outside of drum and bung. Fill the inside of the drum with about 5 gallons of water and swish it around for a couple minutes. Dump out the water and make sure you expelled most of the remaining ingredients from the drum.

Fill up your bucket 1/4-1/3 of the way with water. Add 1 Cup of bleach. Secure bung with your bung wrench. Aggressively shake your drum for 5-10 minutes. Shake it in every which way possible, making sure the water violently hits every square inch of your drum.

Unscrew your bung and check your drum.

Come up with some sort of test to determine if the ingredients have been removed. For example – some of mine contained vanilla. So I would check the side walls to see if there was any visual remnants of the vanilla and I would smell inside of the drum to see if I could still pick up the vanilla scent. If I could only smell the bleach I called it good. If I smelled the vanilla I repeated Step 2.

Once you've cleared your drum as 'good to go', drain it.

**About the Author:** Jessica



I'm an LDS prepper from Lehi, UT. I believe that emergency preparation is vital for everyone and that you don't need to be a survival specialist to get the best emergency preparation for you and your family. I want to take the complexity out of prepping to help those around me get involved.