



AT A GLANCE

The Lifesaver Jerrycan's development was inspired by the catastrophe of the Boxing Day Tsunami.

- It filters down to 15 nanometres (bacteria are about 200nm and the smallest virus is 25nm).
- It filters at about two litres per minute.
- 20,000-litre capacity filters are interchangeable with the 10,000-litre unit.
- Carbon filter taps allow 'flavours' such as chlorine and sulphur to be filtered out as well as pesticides, endocrine disruptors, heavy metals and chemical residues.
- Shelf life of the filter is three years prior to use, then up to five years once primed.
- Available for purchase online for around £200.
- Does not desalinate (remove salts).

Visit the website at www.lifesaversystems.com.

there's no way I'm going to risk contaminating my water tanks with suspect water.

Then I came across the Lifesaver Jerrycan. Developed for disaster relief, the unit can filter 10,000* litres of dirty water into medical grade water (a 20,000-litre filter is also available), and filters things smaller than a virus! Flooding disasters often result in contaminated water supplies, with waterborne pathogens leading to secondary medical disasters. The Lifesaver is used by aid agencies and military forces around the globe to prevent these secondary complications, as well as for filtering water from stagnant and polluted sources in drier climates. Unreliable water can easily ruin a journey with illness.

PUT TO THE TEST

In my test for this article, I stirred up a roadside ditch of muddy water, a few days after rain, and dunked the jerrycan into it. In real life, you'd let the water settle, and then scoop it in to avoid as much dirt and debris as possible. Pouring water in through a piece of cloth would help remove a lot of the particulate matter. Doing this, and rinsing out the dirt after use, helps to extend the life of the filter. But to demonstrate just how good this Lifesaver unit is and that you don't need to start with clean water, I scooped up the whole muddy mess.

The filler incorporates a pneumatic pump, and after a few strokes the increased air pressure in the jerrycan forces the water through the filter to the tap. Out of the tap came soft sweet and very, very clean water. So tasty in fact, that my photographer, who'd imagined it might have a murky taste, decided to order a Lifesaver Jerrycan for himself after the taste test. I'd been confident of the product's performance from my research, but my wife, who'd been sceptical about this purchase, quickly realised its value when she saw the photos.



Safe Water

The LifeSaver water purifiers have been around for a while and are standard issue equipment on many humanitarian relief operations around the world. Now they are making their way onto must-have kit lists for many overlanders. Micheal Konstantinou tries one out, not in the comfort of a workshop but in real-world conditions.

THIS DEVICE HELPS OVERLANDERS IN SEVERAL WAYS:

1. It allows dirty water to be turned into potable water, in volumes that allow water tanks to be refilled.
2. It reduces the volume, and hence weight, of water that needs to be carried, when you know you can find water (of any sort) along the way.
3. It allows local dirty water to be used around the campsite, preserving the water in the water tanks for times when no local water is available.
4. It negates the need to detour on a journey to resupply potable water, hence increasing time in out of the way places.
5. In conjunction with a charcoal filter tap, it helps improve the taste of foul water.
6. In a first aid situation, wounds or burns can be irrigated with copious amounts of sterile water, without being worried that you'll deplete your potable water.
7. It allows for the storage of a reasonable amount of water (a jerrycan's worth) in a vehicle without water tanks.

HOW MUCH POTABLE WATER do you need to carry on a trip? The answer depends on several factors: the number of people; the climate and environment; the length of the journey; and the availability of reliable water sources en-route. Another consideration is the type of vehicle you drive, which can limit your capacity for extra weight. I've travelled with a Defender Ute that's carried 400 litres for a desert trip, and that served four men for two weeks, with 100 litres to spare, but most vehicles don't have the capacity to carry so much weight on top of extra fuel, passengers, camping equipment and tools. In my Defender

station wagon, I carry 95 litres in two water tanks, and that serves a family of five for a couple of weeks if we use local water for washing and, where appropriate, for cooking. If you can't trust the water sources en-route, then there are a number of ways to filter or clean water along the way. Some include UV sterilisation, boiling, chlorine or iodine treatment, or carbon filtering. These methods are often laborious or foul tasting or don't remove all matter from the water. I was after something that would allow me to filter enough water to be able to refill my water tanks on a trip, as well as filter water around the campsite, so a two-litre bottle with a filter in it just wasn't up to the job. And

LIFESAVER BOTTLE

The Lifesaver bottle is simplicity itself to use, just like its larger sibling. Just fill the receptacle with dirty water, pump the handle and the water is forced under pressure through the filter and is instantly safe to drink. They cost around £120 and will treat 4,000 litres of water before you need to change the filter.

www.lifesaversystems.com

