

Decontaminating Flooded Private Wells after Flooding

Residents who use private wells that were flooded during recent severe weather should take precautions against waterborne illnesses by disinfecting the wells once the water stops covering their wells. Disinfection of flooded private wells cannot begin until water covering the affected wells recedes. Fees for testing well water will be waived for residents in flooded areas whose private wells were under water.

Materials needed for emergency disinfection of flooded wells:

- One gallon of non-scented household liquid bleach
- Rubber gloves
- Eye protection
- Old clothes
- A funnel

Steps to disinfect flooded private wells

Step 1

If your water is muddy or cloudy, run the water from an outside spigot with a hose attached until the water becomes clear and free of sediments.

Step 2

Determine what type of well you have and how to pour the bleach into the well. Some wells have a sanitary seal with either an air vent or a plug that can be removed. If it is a bored or dug well, the entire cover can be lifted off to provide a space for pouring the bleach into the well.

Step 3

Take the gallon of bleach and funnel (if needed) and carefully pour the bleach down into the well casing.

Step 4

After the bleach has been added, run water from an outside hose into the well casing until you smell chlorine coming from the hose. Then turn off the outside hose.

Step 5

Turn on all cold water faucets, inside and outside of house, until the chlorine odor is detected in each faucet, then shut them all off. If you have a water treatment system, switch it to bypass before turning on the indoor faucets.

Step 6

Wait six to 24 hours before turning the faucets back on. It is important not to drink, cook, bathe or wash with this water during the time period – it contains high amounts of chlorine.

Step 7

Once the waiting period is up, turn on an outside spigot with hose attached and run the water into a safe area where it will not disturb plants, lakes, streams or septic tanks. Run the water until there is no longer a chlorine odor. Turn the water off.

Step 8

Wait at least 7-10 days after disinfection, then have the water in your well sampled.

Step 9

If you are not sure about performing the disinfection procedure, contact a licensed, professional well installer for assistance.