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Emergency Disinfection of Wells that Have Been Flooded

Before Disinfection: Check the condition of your well. Make sure there is no exposed or damaged wiring. If you notice any damage, call a professional before the disinfection process.

Step 1

Bypass or remove all water treatment devices before starting.

Step 2

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 3

Shut the power to the pump off to avoid any possible electrical shock and remove the well cap. Measure the inside diameter of the well casing and use the table below to determine the total amount of household bleach needed. The bleach must be free of additives like “fresh scent,” algaecides or thickening agents that can chemically contaminate your well.

Well Casing Size	Depth of Well	Bleach required
2 inch	50 feet	1 1/3 Cups
3 inch	50 feet	3 Cups
4 inch	50 feet	1 1/3 Quarts
5 inch	50 feet	1/2 Gallon
6 inch	50 feet	3/4 Gallon

- If the well is less than 50 feet deep, use the amount indicated, but for deeper wells use additional amounts of bleach in proportion to the increased depth.

Step 4

Add the total bleach required to 5 gallons of water in a clean bucket and slowly pour the bleach mixture in to the well casing.

Step 5

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 6

Turn on all cold water faucets in the home starting closest to the well, allow water to run until chlorine odor is detected and then turn off the faucet. Continue the same process for the hot water supply.

Step 7

Wait 6 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 as it contains high amounts of chlorine.

Step 8

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. Once no odor is detected open all faucets to flush the homes internal plumbing.

Step 9

Once you are convinced there is no longer bleach in the system you can collect a sample for bacteria testing, bottles are available at all Health Department offices. Collect the sample from a suitable tap as close to the well as possible, do not test treated water.

Step 10

Failure to obtain a safe sample after disinfection should be discussed with the Health Department or a Licensed Well Driller.