



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**TO: Directors of Health
Chief Sanitarians**

FROM: Environmental Health Section- Private Well Program

DATE: April 18, 2007

RE: Private Well Flooding Concerns

In response to the recent heavy rainfall and the likelihood of additional rainfall, we are providing the following information concerning private wells.

Private wells subject to flooding should be considered contaminated, and require disinfection. Water should be pumped or allowed to recede from around the well, before the well is disinfected.

Homeowners with dug wells should expose their wells and clean the well of possible debris and/or other matter that may have been swept into the well before carrying out disinfection. If the electrical panel and/or connections have been submerged, a licensed electrician should evaluate the electrical panel /connections prior to the homeowner handling the panel/connections.

In order to ensure the water is free from bacteriological contaminants, the well should be sampled after it has been disinfected and tested by a certified laboratory. If there are other suspected contaminants, we are suggesting that people notify the Local Health Departments. DEP involvement may be necessary.

Listed below is procedure for disinfecting a private well and a list of additional resources. Additional information can also be obtained by contacting the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), Environmental Health Section, Private Well Program at (860) 509-7296.

DISINFECTING A PRIVATE WELL

- USE NON-SCENTED CHLORINE BLEACH with a BLEACH solution greater than 5.25% solution. Less strength bleach is available double or increase amount of bleach accordingly.
- If you have water treatment devices, remove all membranes, filters, cartridges, charcoal filters, etc. after the chlorination process is completed.
- If the water is discolored or if you have debris in your dug well, clean the well of debris. Do not disinfect the well until floodwaters have receded.
- Run water until it is relatively clear.
- Turn off; drain your storage tank and hot water tank, so that chlorinated water will also enter that tank.
- Mix up a batch of chlorinated water in a 5-gallon pail and use this mixture to clean along the top of the well. ½ cup to 1 cup of bleach (5.25%) in 5 gallons of water is a relatively good concentration.
- If you feel uncomfortable doing the disinfection process, contact a licensed plumber, pump installer or well driller.
- The chlorine batch in the 5-gallon bucket should be poured into the well so that it swirls around the interior casing.
- Re-cap the well and then proceed to open each hot and cold faucet (inside and outside the house), until a distinct chlorine odor is observed. Then shut each faucet.
- If you do not detect a strong chlorine odor you may want to add more bleach and repeat the process.
- Allow the chlorinated water to remain in the water system for at least 6 hours and preferably overnight.
- Backwash water softeners, sand filters and iron removal filters with chlorinated water.
- Open all faucets individually and run the water until there is no chlorine smell – may take 15 minutes or more.
- Make sure on outside faucets that chlorinated water be diverted from plants, shrubs because chlorinated water will kill the vegetation.
- If a resident is uncomfortable performing the disinfection process, a licensed plumber, pump installer, or well driller should be contacted to perform the disinfection.

Additional Resources:

Connecticut DPH - website: www.dph.state.ct.us

Approved CT Labs:

http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Environmental_Lab/environmental_laboratory.htm

Technical Assistance: Private Well Program 860-509-7296

Environmental Laboratory Program 860-509-7389

EPA:

- website: www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells

- “what to do after the flood”- private wells and septic systems:

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/whatdo.html>

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/emerg_septic.html