

DRINKING WATER WELLS AND FLOODING

Flooding can cause serious problems for homeowners that have a well. Flood waters can carry waterborne disease and chemicals that can cause severe illness in humans and pets. The following are ways to prepare for flooding around your home and things to do after a flood that can help protect your well water.

Before the Flood

Before a flood homeowners, should follow these steps to lessen contamination to a well:

- Make sure that the land around the well is graded (at an angle) to push flood waters away from the well.
- If the land around the well easily erodes away, consider putting in vegetation (such as bushes) or other erosion control measures.
- Extend casing above where you expect the flood level to be or where it has been in the past. This work should only be done by a registered professional.
- Install a watertight well cap.
- Make sure that there has not been any settling of the soil or a space between the soil and the well casing where water can flow down.
- Turn off electricity to the pump just before to the flood.

After the Flood

After the flood, these steps should be followed to make sure your well has not been impacted by the flood and is safe to use:

- If you believe your well has been contaminated, DO NOT use well water for drinking and cooking. Use only disinfected or bottled water and have your well water tested. You can contact Columbus Public Health at 614-645-7005 for testing (if you live within the Columbus city limits) or a private lab.
- Once the flood waters have gone away and the electrical system has dried out, contact a well contractor to have your well's electrical components checked by a qualified electrician.
- Clean the pump of any sand or silt that may have entered the well. A well contractor will be able to properly repair a pump.
- After the well has been inspected and cleaned, pump the well until the water runs clear. Use an outside spigot and direct the water to a nearby drainage way. Depending on the size of the well this can take anywhere from thirty minutes to several hours.
- After the well has been pumped, it should be disinfected. Follow these steps for proper well disinfection:
 1. Remove well cap or seal and set aside.
 2. Pour one gallon of fragrance-free liquid chlorine bleach (5%-6%) into well casing.
 3. Run water from an outside hose into well casing until you smell chlorine coming from the hose. Turn water off when smell is detected.
 4. At each indoor and outdoor faucets, run cold water until you can smell the chlorine and then turn off faucet. (If your home has a water softener, ensure that this is bypassed before running faucets.)
 5. Do not use faucets for 8 to 24 hours.
 6. Once the time has passed, turn on an outside spigot with a hose (point water away from plants, lakes, streams or septic tanks. Run water until you can't smell chlorine.
 7. Your well water is now disinfected.
 8. Have water tested 7 to 10 days after disinfection.



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