

Disinfection of Private Water Wells

Please read **all** instructions **before** beginning.

1. Most domestic water wells have a well casing extending above ground level. The casing will be topped by either a sanitary well seal or by a weather cap. If your well has a weather cap, remove it by unscrewing the bolts which cinch the cap to the casing then proceed to step 3. If your well has a sanitary seal, proceed to step 2. If your well has neither call the Health Department for advice.
2. Most sanitary well seals have either a vent hole or an access hole. Either of these may be used for introducing the liquid bleach into the well. If no vent or access hole is available, the sanitary seal must be removed. **CAUTION:** If removing the well seal, loosen the bolts only enough to move the seal – unscrewing the bolts all the way will cause the bottom plate to fall into the well.
3. Pour one gallon of bleach into the well using a funnel.
4. Connect a hose to a faucet near the well and insert the other end of the hose into the well access or vent hole.
5. Turn on the faucet. Water pumped from the well and returned will mix the chlorine bleach with the well water.
6. Allow the water to run for 30 minutes. Wash the inside of the well casing with the chlorinated water half of this time to disinfect these surfaces. If using the access hole, do the best you can do to direct the water flow to the inside surface of the casing.
7. After 30 minutes, shut off the water, disconnect the hose and replace the access plug, the sanitary seal, or the well weather cap, as appropriate.
8. Inside the house, open each water faucet, (hot and cold) and allow the water to run until the smell of chlorine (bleach) can be detected. This removes the unchlorinated water and replaces it with water containing chlorine. With the water lines chlorinated in this manner, allow the system to remain undisturbed for at least 24 hours.
9. After 24 hours, turn on an outside faucet allowing the water to flow until the smell of chlorine cannot be detected. Complete this step before continuing to step 10. The chlorinated water will not adversely affect a lawn. The use of an outside faucet is important: this flow of water through the house waste plumbing will overload the septic tank and drainfield.
10. Inside the house open each cold water faucet until the smell of chlorine cannot be detected. This will remove the chlorinated water from the household plumbing.
11. When all the chlorinated water is removed from the well (by running an outside faucet) and from the household plumbing (by running each inside faucet) a sample may be drawn for bacteriological analysis. This can take two days or more and can be checked using a chlorine test packet. Instructions and sample bottles may be obtained at the Public Health office.