



## FLOODED WELLS – EMERGENCY DISINFECTION

**Before Disinfection:** Check the condition of your well. Make sure there is no exposed or damaged wiring. If you notice any damage or have any concerns about the safety of your well or the disinfection process outlined below, the Office of Drinking Water recommends contacting a licensed plumber or well driller to inspect and chlorinate the well.

**Materials Needed:** One gallon of non-scented liquid household bleach  
Rubber gloves  
Eye protection  
Funnel

- 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 is 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 6 to 24 hours before turning the faucets back on. It is important not to drink, cook, bathe or wash with this water during this period, since 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** The system should now be disinfected.
- Step 9** Have your water tested for bacteria after disinfection. For information on sampling and testing your well, please contact the Office of Drinking Water at (302) 741-8630. If the test result is absent, you can now use the water.

**Adapted from:**

Environmental Protection Agency's Fact Sheets for "Emergency Disinfection of Drinking Water and What to Do After the Flood," August 2006.

**24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156**

Revised: 08/2013

Page 1 of 1