



What to Do When Your Private Water Well has Flooded

If your water well has flooded or surface floodwater enters the well head and goes down into the casing, your water might be contaminated with bacteria or chemicals. Wells in pits or basements can also flood or be contaminated. When flooding happens, your well needs to be checked. Even if your well looks fine, bacteria and chemicals can still get in.

If my water well has flooded can I use the water?

If your well has flooded, do **not** use the water:

- to drink, cook, or bathe. Use another safe water source (municipal truck-fill, bottled water, or a neighbour's well that isn't flooded) instead. If this isn't possible, bring water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute before you use it.
- until a licensed water-well contractor has checked your well and the floodwater has been flushed or purged from the casing and then shock chlorinated and tested.

It is important to make sure the septic system is functional before using water fixtures.

If my water well has flooded, what do I need to do to the well and pump?

Flood waters can carry waste (e.g., wood, rocks, metal objects) that can damage the well casing, electrical parts, and the pump. When the flood waters have gone down (receded), call a licensed water-well contractor to check your well system. The pump (including valves and gears) might need to be cleaned to remove any soil or sand. Don't turn on the pump until the wiring system has been checked by a qualified electrician or a licensed water-well contractor because there is a risk of being electrocuted and damaging the well and pump.

Do I need to have my well and plumbing disinfected?

If flooded, the well and the whole plumbing system connected to it needs to be shock chlorinated. For more information about shock chlorination, visit <http://aep.alberta.ca/water/education-guidelines/working-well/resources-and-related-links.aspx>.

Do I need to have my well water tested?

Before you use your well again, have the water tested for bacteria by contacting your community based water monitor at your local Health Centre to arrange for sampling. Don't drink untreated well water until you get your test results back.

If you think your well has been contaminated with chemicals, contact your local Environmental Health Officer through the Health Centre to arrange for sampling.

How do I protect my well from flooding in the future?

When the flood is over and the well is back to normal, check with a licensed water-well contractor or Environmental Public Health for more information to protect your well from future floods. This may include:

- extending your well casing
- installing a flood-proof cap with an extended vent
- relocating your well
- upgrading pit wells

For more information, contact the local Environmental Health Office.

Environmental Public Health Services
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