

Safe Drinking Water: *During a Flood*

What to do during a flood

- Check for local boil-water advisories. Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, make ice or make baby formula.
- If your well has been affected by flood waters, it is recommended that you boil your water for at least one minute at a rolling boil, or purchase water from a safe source. Before resuming normal use of the well, have the water tested for possible bacteria and pollutants.



Disinfecting Well After a Disaster

Approximate Amount of Bleach for Disinfection of a Drilled or Driven Well

Depth of Water	Diameter of Well Casing		
	4 inches	6 inches	8 inches
10 feet	3 1/4 tbsp	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
20 feet	6 1/2 tbsp	1 cup	1 1/2 cups
30 feet	9 3/4 tbsp	1 1/2 cups	2 1/4 cups
40 feet	13 tbsp	2 cups	3 cups
50 feet	1 cup	2 1/2 cups	3 3/4 cups
100 feet	2 cups	5 cups	7 1/2 cups

Do not use scented or splashless bleach.

Quantities given in this table are approximate and are rounded to the nearest practical measurement. Amounts given are calculated in accordance with reaching a chlorine concentration of >100mg/L.

Method:

Caution: Bleach is a hazardous material. Read all warnings before use. Wear suitable clothing, gloves, and eye protection.

1. Using a 5-gallon bucket, mix the bleach from Table with 3-5 gallons of water (12-19 liters).
2. Remove the vent cap.
3. Pour the bleach water mixture into the well using a funnel. Avoid all electrical connections. Attach a clean hose to the nearest outside faucet and use it to circulate water back into the well for thorough mixing.
4. Rinse the inside of the well casing with a garden hose or bucket for 5-10 minutes.
5. Open all faucets inside the home and run the water until you notice a strong odor of chlorine (bleach) at each faucet. Turn off all faucets and allow the solution to remain in the well and plumbing for a minimum of 12 hours.
6. After at least 12 hours, attach a hose to an outside faucet and drain the chlorinated water onto an area without plants or other vegetation, such as a driveway. Continue draining until the chlorine odor disappears. Avoid draining into open sources of water (streams, ponds, etc.).
7. Turn on all indoor faucets and run water until the chlorine odor disappears.

Water Sampling After Disinfection

- Wait at least 7 to 10 days to test the water after disinfection to ensure that the chlorine has been thoroughly flushed from the system. Until well water has been tested, boil it (rolling boil for 1 minute) before using or use another alternative water source.
- Link to ORELAP Accredited OREGON Laboratories that Test Drinking Water and Accept Samples from the Public:
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/LABORATORYSERVICES/ENVIRONMENTALLABORATORYACCREDITATION/Documents/AllLabsDWMMatrix.pdf>
- Sample the water for total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria to confirm that the water is safe to drink.
- If the results show no presence of total coliforms or fecal coliforms, the water can be considered safe to drink.
- Follow up with more water tests, one in the next 2 to 4 weeks and another in 3 to 4 months.
- Check the safety of your water over the long term, continue to monitor bacterial quality at least twice per year or more often if you suspect any changes in your water quality.

If results show the presence of any coliform bacteria, repeat the well disinfection process and test again. If tests continue to show the presence of bacteria, contact your local health department for assistance.

[OHA Drinking Water Testing](#)
[CDC Disinfection of Wells](#)