

# **DARIEN HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

## **PRIVATE WELL FLOODING CONCERNS**

In a recent response to the recent heavy rainfall and the likelihood of additional rainfall, the State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health has issued the following information concerning private wells.

Private wells subject to flooding should be considered contaminated, and disinfected. Water should be pumped or allowed to recede around the well, before the well is disinfected.

Homeowners with dug wells should expose their wells and clean the well of possible debris and/or other matter that may have been swept into the well before carrying out disinfection. If the electrical panel and/or connections have been submerged, a licensed electrician should evaluate the electrical panel/connections prior to the homeowner handling the panel/connections.

In order to ensure the water is free from bacteriological contaminants, the well should be sampled after it has been disinfected and tested by a certified laboratory. If there are other suspected contaminants, it is suggested that people notify the health department. DEP involvement may be necessary.

Listed below is procedure for disinfecting a private well and a list of additional resources. Additional information can also be obtained by contacting the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), Environmental Health Section, Private Well program at (860-509-7296).

### **DISINFECTING A PRIVATE WELL**

- USE NON-SCENTED CHLORINE BLEACH with a BLEACH solution greater than 5.25% solution. If bleach less than 5.25% is only available, double or increase amount of bleach accordingly.
- If you have water treatment devices, remove all membranes, filters, cartridges, charcoal filters, etc. after the chlorination process is completed.
- If the water is discolored or if you have debris in your dug well, clean the well of debris. Do not disinfect the well until floodwaters have receded.
- Run water until it is relatively clear.
- Turn off; drain your storage tank and hot water tank, so that chlorinated water will also enter that tank.
- Mix up a batch of chlorinated water in a 5-gallon pail and use this mixture to clean along the top of the well. ½ cup to 1 cup of bleach (5.25%) in 5 gallons of water is a relatively good concentration.
- If you feel uncomfortable doing the disinfection process, contact a licensed plumber, pump installer or well driller.

- The chlorine batch in the 5-gallon bucket should be poured into the well so that it swirls around the interior casing.
- Re-cap the well and then proceed to open each hot and cold faucet (inside and outside the house), until a distinct chlorine odor is observed. Then shut each faucet.
- If you do not detect a strong chlorine odor you may want to add more bleach and repeat the process.
- Allow the chlorinated water to remain in the water system for at least 6 hours and preferably overnight.
- Backwash water softeners, and sand filters and iron removal filters with chlorinated water.
- Open all faucets individually and run the water until there is no chlorine smell – may take 15 minutes or more.
- Make sure on outside faucets that chlorinated water be diverted from plants, shrubs because chlorinated water will kill the vegetation.

Additional Resources: Conn. DPH – website [www.dph.state.ct.us](http://www.dph.state.ct.us)

**Approved CT Labs:**

[http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Environmental\\_Lab/list\\_instate.pdf](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Environmental_Lab/list_instate.pdf)

Technical Assistance: Private Well Program 860-509-7321; Environmental Lab Program 860-509-7389

**EPA: - website:** [www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells)

- “what to do after the flood” – private wells and septic systems:  
[www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/whatdo.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/whatdo.html);  
[http://www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/emerg\\_septic.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/emerg_septic.html)