



FLOOD RECOVERY - Sampling Private Wells

During flooding events, private drinking water wells can easily become contaminated with flood waters. The Fact Sheet "FLOOD RECOVERY - Restoring Private Wells" provides advice on how to determine if your well may be contaminated, and how to restore it for safe use. It advises that flood impacted drinking water wells should be sampled. If your well was covered with flood waters, or if your well is shallow and near an area that was flooded, then you should consider sampling it for bacteriological contamination.

Use this checklist to help decide when you are ready to sample. Sampling of your well should not take place until the following has occurred:

- The area around the well has drained of flood waters and has been cleaned up.
- The well is good condition and operable. Any needed repairs have been completed.
- The well has been flushed of any flood water that entered the well, and the well and attached plumbing has been properly disinfected.
- After disinfection, the well has been flushed to remove chlorinated water.

After all of the above conditions have been met and checked, sampling may take place. Proper sampling techniques are very important for true and accurate results. Follow these steps when sampling your well:

1. Obtain a sterile "BacT" bottle from a laboratory certified by NY State for potable water analysis. You can find contact information for certified laboratories at: <http://www.wadsworth.org/labcert/elap/comm.html> or from the Fact Sheet "FLOOD RECOVERY - Well Sampling Laboratories" that is also posted on the DOH website.
2. Do not open the bottle until you are ready to fill it, and close it immediately once it is filled with sample water. Do not rinse the contents from bottle. Do not touch the inside of the bottle or bottle cap with your fingers (if you do, STOP and get another bottle).
3. From the kitchen cold water tap remove the anti-splash screen from the faucet.
4. Disinfect the faucet tip by dipping the tip in chlorine bleach (use bleach cap to bring bleach to the faucet tip); or by "flaming" the faucet tip with a lighter or match for 10 seconds (be sure to remove rubber faucet seals first).
5. Let the cold water run for 4 - 5 minutes.
6. Fill the sterile bottle to the 100 ml line and cap it tightly. REMEMBER... do not touch the inside of the bottle or lid.
7. Fill out the sample label and form provided by the lab, especially remember to add contact and address information.
8. Put the filled bottle in your refrigerator until you are ready to return it.
9. Return the bottle to your chosen laboratory, keep the sample chilled on the way.

If you have questions, please contact your local Health Department for more information.

Contact information for the health office that serves your county can be found on the DOH website at: http://www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/water/doh_pub_contacts_map.htm