



## PROCEDURE FOR DISINFECTION OF PRIVATE WELL/WATER SYSTEMS

Private wells and water systems should be disinfected when contamination by coliform bacteria has been confirmed or is likely to have occurred. Although there are several ways to properly disinfect a well, the following procedure has proven to be simple and effective. Wells with improper seals or unsanitary construction features should be repaired prior to disinfection.

- 1) Turn the power off to the well pump. Bypass any water softener or other treatment devices. Remove the well seal and pull the wires up and out of the way as much as possible. Pour one or two gallons of unscented laundry bleach into the well.
- 2) Connect a garden hose to an outside faucet. Place the hose in the well casing and turn on the water. Turn the power back on to the well pump. Rinse down the sides of the well casing with the hose for 15 to 20 minutes. (This procedure circulates the bleach through the water system to insure better disinfection).
- 3) Turn on each cold-water tap in the house until you smell the bleach. Then turn the tap off. Repeat this procedure until all the cold water lines in the house are filled with chlorinated water. Hot water lines do not need disinfection.
- 4) Turn the power off to the pump. Replace the electrical wires. Replace the well seal. Turn the power back on.
- 5) Contact the manufacturer of any water treatment device for information on how to disinfect the device and follow their procedures.
- 6) Let the bleach remain in the system for **at least 8 hours and preferably 24 hours**.
- 7) Remove the bleach from the water system by turning on a garden hose and allowing the chlorinated water to run onto an area where it will not damage lawns, shrubs, gardens or septic systems. Pump until you can no longer smell bleach in the water from the hose. Then open each cold-water faucet in the house and run each faucet until you can no longer smell bleach. Turn on water treatment devices only after it they have been properly disinfected as recommended by the manufacturer.
- 8) After all traces of bleach have been flushed from the well a water sample should be submitted for bacterial analysis.
- 9) Occupants should continue to use water from a safe source (bottled or other well) for drinking and cooking purposes until laboratory results confirm the water is safe.
- 10) Resample the water system after approximately 2 weeks to verify the disinfection was effective.

**\* If bacteria are still present, chlorinate again. For a more effective chlorination, you may add the following steps:**

- Before Step #1 - fill a clean garbage can or a few clean pails with 15 to 20 gallons of water from the well. Add ½ gallon unscented laundry bleach to the water and mix. Set aside for later use.
- At Step #4, add the following step - after turning off power to the pump, pour the chlorinated water from the garbage can or pails into the well. Finish Step #4 as stated above. Finish Steps #5 through #10 as stated above.

For further information on chlorination and bacteriological contamination of drinking water supplies, contact the Eau Claire City-County Health Department at (715) 839-4718.