

# Disinfection of Water Wells

## Water well should be disinfected when:

1. The well is newly drilled.
2. Repair to the well or pumping equipment is complete.
3. An Unsafe sample has been reported.

Ordinary liquid laundry bleach may be used to disinfect a well. Liquid laundry bleach contains 5.25% chlorine. **WARNING: DO NOT USE SCENTED BLEACH SUCH AS LEMON, PINE, SPRING RAIN, ETC.**

## In order to disinfect a well:

1. Before adding chlorine, pump the well enough in advance to completely remove sediment and other debris caused by construction or repair.
2. Most wells are approximately 100 feet deep. Wells can be between 80 and 300 feet. These wells can usually be disinfected with 1 gallon of bleach. Some wells may need more or less. The general rule of thumb is one gallon of bleach for household well approximately 100 feet deep.
3. Remove the well seal and add enough chlorine to make a solution with a concentration of 50 to 100 parts per million.
4. Turn the heating element off in your hot water heater. Heating highly chlorinated water may cause damage to heating element.
5. Attach a garden hose to an outside faucet and open the faucet. Let the water coming out of the hose fall into the well casing. This will allow the bleach to mix with the column of water in the well. Let the water run for 30 minutes and then turn off the water and remove the hose. Replace the sanitary seal.
6. Open each water tap (hot and cold) in the system until a strong chlorine odor is present and then close the tap. This will disinfect the house line pressure tank and hot water heater.
7. Let the chlorine remain in the system for 24 hours.
8. There will be enough chlorine in the discharge to kill the organisms in a septic system and the volume of water may over load a septic system.
9. Flush the system thoroughly using the outside faucet. This process may take as long as 36 hours if an excess of chlorine is used. Chlorine test kits can be purchased at pool supply businesses or in pet supply departments.
10. Resample. If the sample is safe, wait a month and sample again to check for recontamination.

NOTE: Chlorinating a well may also help in some cases with taste and odor problems such as "rotten egg" taste and odor due to high level of iron, sulfur and manganese. In these cases the procedure may have to be done on a regular basis such as quarterly or annually depending on if or when the odor returns.