



Power Outages

Private Wells and Natural Disasters

Prepare, Respond, And Recover

Safety Reminders

During a power outage it is important to stay informed and take necessary precautions to ensure safe water usage during power disruptions. To be prepared, understand your well type, know its location, and familiarize



- Pump
 - Treatment system (including any filters)
 - Electrical components
- Store all well documents in an easily accessible location.
- Store possible contaminant sources away from your well. This may include chemicals, fertilizer, and flammable materials such as paint, gasoline, solvents, or paper (often used as insulation).
- Install shut-off valves right before and after the pressure tank to prevent contaminated water from entering the tank. This also creates a spot to shut off the water line before any water storage or treatment devices.
- Install backflow prevention valves on all hydrants and outside taps.
-



- Well cap, seals, and vents (vents should be unplugged).
- Plastic PVC casing, liner, and any aboveground piping used to bring water to your home.
- Well houses and equipment (such as chlorinators, water treatment equipment, and electronic controls).
- Indoor piping, storage and pressure tanks, and overflow pipes.
- Gaps around the outside of the well casing. The grout may have been damaged or the casing may have large cracks.
- Debris entering uncovered wells or storage tanks.
-



Step 3: Test Well Water

You should test your well water for coliform bacteria and nitrate to make sure it is safe before use. Contact your local health department to ask about other contaminants of concern. Testing your water will also tell you if you need to disinfect your water system.

- Get a water sample kit. Recovery teams may be distributing water-sampling kits. If not, call your local health department, a certified water testing laboratory, or university extension service.
- Follow the instructions on the sampling kit to avoid accidental cross-contamination and inaccurate results. Return the sample to the lab as soon as possible.
- Drink, cook, and bathe with bottled water or a stored water source until the results from the lab confirm that water is safe to use and all necessary repairs are completed.
- Retest the water to confirm the results are below [EPA's maximum contaminant levels \(MCLs\)](#). Contact your local health department for the best timeframe to retest.
- Consult with the manufacturer or a licensed water treatment installer if the filter or softener has been exposed to contaminated water.

Step 4: Disinfect Well

If your water is contaminated or repairs were performed, you may need to have the well professionally disinfected, especially if ammonia is present. Retest the water before use and be sure parameters are below [EPA's maximum contaminant levels \(MCLs\)](#).

Acknowledgements

The Private Water Network is supported through the OT18-1802 Cooperative Agreement between the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United States (US) Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Private Wells and Natural Disasters: Prepare, Respond, and Recover is a series of factsheets for environmental public health professionals who specialize in private wells, and as a resource for private well owners, developed in collaboration with members from the NEHA Private Water and Decentralized Wastewater Program Committee and the Private Water Network.

For additional tools and resources please visit: neha.org/water-quality.



References

