After a Flood: Need help testing your well?

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Recovering from a flood can be overwhelming, and when you are ready to return, many priorities will require your attention. To help ensure your drinking water is safe, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) is offering water testing support to private well owners, as floods may lead to well water contamination.

Important Information and Safety Tips:

Safety First: Turn off power to your well pump before inspecting the area to avoid electrical shock.

Use Safe Water: Until you know your water is safe, use bottled water or a water source known to be safe for drinking, cooking, and bathing. If commercially bottled water is not available, boil your tap water. To kill germs, bring water to a full rolling boil for 1 minute. At elevations above 6,500 feet, boil for 3 minutes. To avoid burns, allow boiled water to cool before you use it. If you feed your child formula, provide ready-to-use formula if possible.Boiling water cannot remove nitrates or nitrites. Well water contaminated with nitrates or nitrites should not be used for preparing baby formula.

Inspect the Wellhead: Check your well for any physical damage from the flood. Check that the well cap is tight and that there is no debris or damage to the wellhead. If you find any, contact a licensed well contractor to have it repaired.

Disinfect and Test: After a flood, it's important to have your well water tested for potential contaminants. If needed, a qualified water well or pump contractor can service your well, as they have the tools and expertise to safely clean and disinfect it. After disinfection, wait at least 7-10 days for the chlorine to be flushed from the system, and then have your water tested to ensure it is safe to drink.

Steps to ensure well water is safe for household use and drinking:

1. Inspect and repair the well
2. Disinfect the well
3. Clean and flush the well
4. Test the well water

The ADHS Private Well Water Program may be able to assist. Email us at wellwaterquality@azdhs.gov.

- Private wells used for drinking water and domestic purposes are eligible to apply.

- ADHS can assist with water testing for private wells affected by floods.
- ADHS will coordinate with a private contractor and you will be provided with the test results.
- Program availability depends on available funds.
- If a well needs to be repaired or treatment needs to be installed, the repair and installation will need to be coordinated and funded by the well owner.

How to Participate in the Program:

Private well owners interested in free testing should contact ADHS to see if they are eligible.

Email: wellwaterquality@azdhs.gov

To be eligible, you must:

- Be the owner of a private well.
- Be willing to provide the designated contractor or partnering agency representative access to your well to complete services.
- Ensure your well is in good working order. Damaged wells must be fixed before sampling can occur

ADHS cannot assist with the repair of damaged wells, the cost of these repairs, or any needed treatment solutions.

For More Information:

Visit the ADHS website (tinyurl.com/ADHSwells) or for more details on water testing or email wellwaterquality@azdhs.gov. For help understanding your results and treatment options, email environmentaltoxicology@azdhs.gov.

If you prefer to test your well on your own, you can find a list of certified water testing laboratories at **azdhs.gov/labs4h2o**. Call first to verify services and costs, if you prefer to coordinate testing through one of these laboratories.

Additional Resources:

CDC Reentering your Flooded Home - https://www.cdc.gov/floods/safety/reentering-your-flooded-home-safety.html

EPA What to do After the Flood - https://www.neha.org/Images/resources/Wells%20-%20What%20to%20do%20after%20a%20flood.pdf

How to Disinfect Wells After and Emergency - https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/how-to-disinfect-wells-after-an-emergency.html

ADEQ Recommendations for Private Wells Impacted by Flooding - https://www.cochise.az.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8537/Arizona-Department-of-Environmental-Quality-Fact-Sheet-Wells-Impacted-by-Flooding-PDF

ATSDR information on Nitrates and Nitrites - https://archive.cdc.gov/www_atsdr_cdc_gov/csem/nitrate-nitrite/who_risk.html

CDC information on boil water advisories - https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/drinking-water-advisories-an-overview.html#cdc_health_safety_special_topic_how-boil-water-advisory

Email us at wellwaterquality@azdhs.gov for an electronic version of this notice for easy use of links or to learn more about how ADHS can assist you.