

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

For Immediate Release

March 1, 2015

Contact:

Florida Department of Health  
772-221-4090

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR WELL IS FLOODED

(Martin County, FL) Heavy rainfall and flooding may have made your well water unsafe to drink, if flood waters covered the well. If you are unsure about the impact of flooding on your well water, use bottled water. Boil or disinfect all the water you use for drinking, making beverages or ice, cooking, brushing your teeth, washing dishes, and washing areas of the skin that have been cut or injured.

Bring water to a rolling boil for one minute and cool before use. Common unscented household bleach (4 to 6 percent active ingredient) can be used effectively as a chlorine disinfectant. Disinfect the water by adding 8 drops (about 1/8 teaspoon) of unscented household bleach per gallon of water, and then let it stand for 30 minutes. Repeat the procedure if the water is still cloudy.

It is important to disinfect both well and plumbing water with unscented household bleach to make sure all infectious organisms are destroyed. If you have water treatment devices, remove all membranes, cartridges, and filters and replace them after the chlorination process is completed.

### Steps for disinfecting a contaminated well:

The amount of chlorine determines the length of time you allow the bleach to remain in your system. DOH recommends the following steps to disinfect a contaminated well:

- If the water is discolored** before adding the bleach, run the water until it is clear for up to 10 minutes.
- Turn off and then drain** your hot water heater; bleach is not effective in water above 105 degrees.
- Remove and replace** charcoal filters after the disinfecting process is completed.
- To avoid adding contamination** to the well during disinfection, clean the work area around the top of the well. Then remove grease and mineral deposits from accessible parts of the well head and flush the outside surfaces with 1/2 cup of unscented household bleach in 5 gallons of water.
- Turn off the pump.** Remove the cap or well plug on the rubber seal. There are many types of well caps and plugs. If you have questions, you should contact a licensed well driller. If you have a submersible pump, you may also want to contact a licensed well driller for advice on disinfection processes.

**Florida Department of Health**

in MARTIN COUNTY  
3441 SE Willoughby Boulevard • Stuart, FL 34994  
PHONE: 772/221-4000 • FAX 772/221-4041

**www.MartinCountyHealth.com**

TWITTER:HealthyFLA  
FACEBOOK:FLDepartmentofHealth  
YOUTUBE: fldoh

**Check the bleach chart below** and pour the recommended amount of unscented bleach (4 to 6 percent active ingredient) solution into the well. Try to coat the sides of the casing as you pour. If you get bleach on the pump or wiring, flush it thoroughly with fresh water to prevent later corrosion.

| Well Depth in Feet | Well Diameter in Inches |         |         |         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                    | 2"                      | 4"      | 5"      | 6"      |
| 20'                | 1 cup                   | 1 cup   | 1 cup   | 1 cup   |
| 30'                | 1 cup                   | 1 cup   | 1 cup   | 2 cups  |
| 40'                | 1 cup                   | 1 cup   | 2 cups  | 2 cups  |
| 50'                | 1 cup                   | 2 cups  | 2 cups  | 3 cups  |
| 80'                | 1 cup                   | 2 cups  | 1 qt    | 1 qt    |
| 100'               | 1 cup                   | 3 cups  | 1 qt    | 1.5 qts |
| 150'               | 2 cups                  | 1 qt    | 2 qts   | 2.5 qts |
| 200'               | 3 cups                  | 1.5 qts | 2.5 qts | 3 qts   |

**Conversions**

8 oz = 1 cup                      16 oz = 1 pint = 2 cups  
 24 oz = 3 cups                  32 oz = 1 quart              48 oz = 1.5 quarts  
 64 oz = 2 quarts                80 oz = 2.5 quarts        96 oz = 3 quarts

- **Re-cap or plug the well** opening and wait 30 minutes.
- Turn on and, if needed, re-prime the pump.** Open all of the faucets on the system one at a time. Allow the water to run until there is a noticeable smell of bleach. You may also want to flush the toilets. If you have outside faucets, you may want to direct the water away from sensitive plants. If you cannot detect a bleach odor, repeat the well disinfecting process.
- Turn off all of the faucets** and allow the bleach to remain in the plumbing system for at least 8 hours.
- Backwash water softeners**, sand filters, and iron removal filters with bleach water.
- Again, open all the faucets** and run the water until there is no bleach smell—for up to 15 minutes. After disinfecting your well, the water needs to be tested to verify that it is safe to drink. Although unscented household bleach is effective against microorganisms, it will not remove chemical contamination that may have gotten into your well.

After disinfecting your well, the water needs to be tested to verify that it is safe to drink. Although unscented household bleach is effective against microorganisms, it will not remove chemical contamination that may have gotten into your well. Contact the health department at 772-221-4090 for a list of state certified labs that provide testing.

###