

Shock Chlorinate Your Well

Information for Individual Well Owners

Environmental Health Division
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Disinfect Your Well

Test your well regularly for coliform bacteria to ensure a safe water supply. This is vital to the operation and maintenance of your well.

When you receive your test results from the certified lab, the report should indicate “satisfactory” results.

An “unsatisfactory” result may mean you have disease causing bacteria in your water supply.

Chlorination Process to Kill Bacteria

Disinfection using chlorine bleach is one of the most common ways to kill bacteria in water.



The following procedure may be used to provide a one-time shock chlorination of wells which have tested positive for coliform bacteria. This procedure should be done in the evening. The addition of bleach will affect the taste and the smell of the water. Turn electricity to the pump off.

Follow these simple steps to kill the bacteria in the well. If re-testing indicates that bacteria are still present in the water system, this may indicate that a more thorough assessment of the water system is needed. Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department can help you with this process. Please contact us at (253) 798-6470, option 2.

1. Remove the well cap or unscrew the access port on the well. The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department recommends contacting a water professional for this procedure.
2. Refer to the chart for the amount of bleach to add to your well. The amount of bleach is dependent on the size of your well casing and your well depth.
3. Mix the bleach with water before pouring into the well.
4. Pour bleach-water mixture into the well using a funnel.
5. Leave the pump off for two to three hours to allow the bleach a sufficient contact time to disinfect the well.
6. Turn on electricity to the pump. Turn on all inside faucets in all the homes using this water system, until you are able to smell bleach. Turn off the faucets and let sit overnight. This will bring the bleach through the lines to disinfect them.
7. In the morning or, after waiting 8 hours, run the outside faucets to begin to flush out the chlorine. Continue flushing until you can no longer detect a chlorine smell.
8. Repeat samples should not be taken until all chlorine is out of the system (no taste or odor). It may take two to three days for the chlorine to be completely flushed from your system.

Type of bleach to use: The suggested amount of bleach to use in the table shown below is based on the use of standard household bleach which typically has a chlorine concentration of 8%. Avoid using ultra or concentrated bleach products which will have a much higher chlorine concentration and will result in over chlorination. It's also recommended to avoid bleach products with additives or perfumes.

AMOUNT OF HOUSEHOLD CHLORINE BLEACH				
Well Depth	6-Inch Well Casing	8-Inch Well Casing	10-Inch Well Casing	12-Inch Well Casing
20	2 cups	3 cups	1 quart	1 quart
30	2 cups	3 cups	1 ½ quarts	2 quarts
40	3 cups	1 quart	2 quarts	2 ½ quarts
50	3 cups	1 ½ quart	2 ½ quarts	3 quarts
60	4 cups	2 quarts	3 quarts	4 quarts
80	1 quart	2 quarts	3 ½ quarts	5 quarts
100	1 ½ quarts	2 ½ quarts	4 quarts	1 ½ gallons
125	2 quarts	3 quarts	5 quarts	2 gallons
150	2 ½ quarts	4 quarts	1 ½ gallons	2 ½ gallons
200	3 quarts	5 quarts	2 gallons	3 gallons
250	3 ½ quarts	1 ½ gallons	2 ½ gallons	3 ½ gallons
300	4 quarts	2 gallons	3 gallons	4 gallons
350	4 ½ quarts	2 ½ gallons	3 ½ gallons	4 ½ gallons

If you have a hand dug well, sand point, or spring please notify Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department for other procedures to disinfect your source.

If you have additional questions or want more information, please contact Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Drinking Water Program at (253) 798-6470, option 2, or email us at EHDrinkingWater@tpchd.org.