



DORCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICE

3 Cedar Street
Cambridge, MD 21613

410-228-1167
FAX: 410-901-8192

If your wellhead was submerged...

- 1) Don't use the water for drinking, cooking, or bathing. Flood water is likely to be contaminated with animal wastes, sewage, fuel oils, or other substances. Use bottled water or disinfect the water by boiling for three minutes.
- 2) Turn off electrical power to the well pump. Inspect the well head and pumphouse for damage after the flood water recedes. If the wellhead, pump controls or pump are damaged, contact a well driller. Do not turn on the pump until the electrical components are dry.
- 3) As soon as possible after the electricity is restored, flush the flood water out of the well by running water from an outside faucet for 6-12 hours or longer until the water clears and/or the salty taste is gone.
- 4) After flushing, the well should be disinfected by a licensed well driller. A 4 inch diameter well can be disinfected according to the following procedure:
 - a) Materials:
 - i) 1 gallon of unscented household bleach.
(Use 1 pint per 100 feet of 4" diameter casing. In southern and western Dorchester County, assume your well is 400 feet deep unless you know otherwise.)
 - ii) 4-6 or more clean plastic 5 gallon buckets.
 - iii) A garden hose(s) long enough to reach from an outside faucet to the well.
 - b) At the wellhead, fill the buckets with water and add the bleach in equal parts to each bucket. Stir the solution.
 - c) For a well with a submersible pump, turn off the electric power to the well. Remove the well cap and pull the electric cable and wire connectors out of the well casing.
 - d) Pour the buckets of chlorinated water into the well.
 - e) Turn on the electric power.
 - f) Connect the hose to an outside faucet. Run water from the hose until a strong odor of chlorine is detected. Then run the water into the well casing and circulate for 15 minutes.
 - g) Run water through all faucets until a strong odor of chlorine is detected.
 - h) Refill the buckets with chlorinated water and turn off the water. Let the well sit unused for an hour.
 - i) Again, pour the buckets of chlorinated water into the well.
 - j) Reinstall the well cap.
 - k) Let the well sit unused for at least 6 hours preferably overnight.
 - l) Run the water from an outside faucet, not into the septic system, until the odor of chlorine cannot be detected. This will usually take at least 3-5 days.
- 5) After the disinfection, the well should be sampled to determine the effectiveness of the disinfection. Contact Dorchester County Environmental Health Office at 410-228-1167 or a water testing laboratory to request a sample. Depending on the length of time the well was submerged, the quality of the flood water, and the condition of the well; repeated disinfections may be necessary to fully sanitize the well.
- 6) Once the well is producing potable water again, you should have a licensed well driller take the following actions to prevent future well flooding:
 - a) Extend the top of the well casing above the flood level.
 - b) Install a watertight well cap.