



## FLOOD CLEAN-UP: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WATER WELLS / WATER SUPPLIES

### Q: Should I continue to use my water well if the well head is under water?

A: No. Water wells submerged in floodwater should not be utilized until the floodwater has receded.

A water supply which has been subjected to flooding must be considered contaminated and unsafe to drink for cooking, to make ice, to brush teeth, or to wash dishes.

### Q: How will I know if my water supply is safe to use?

A: Water wells should not be used until a sample, collected from the well, confirms that the water is free of coliform bacteria.

Residents served by community water supplies will be notified by the operator if there are any restrictions on the use of the water.

### Q: What are safe alternatives for drinking water until the water well has been confirmed to be safe?

A: Obtain bottled water or bring tap water to a rolling boil for at least five (5) minutes.

### Q: How do I get my water well tested?

A: McHenry County Department of Health will perform free testing of flooded private water wells for coliform bacteria after the flood waters have receded and the well has been thoroughly flushed and disinfected. (See the Department's [Well Disinfection Instruction Sheet](#))

Water sample kits and chain of custody forms are available at the McHenry County Department of Health.

- Please contact the Department for water sampling bottle availability prior to visiting the Department.
- Water samples may be dropped off at the Environmental Division Office, Monday to Thursday, between 8am-2pm.
- Water samples should be collected the same day of drop off. Samples collected greater than 24 hours before drop off cannot be tested.
- Please note a completed chain of custody form is required at the time of sample drop off.

### Q: What if my water well is not operating properly?

A: Contact a Licensed Water Well Installation Contractor to evaluate your water supply. (See the list of licensed water well contractors on our website.) Water well contractors may also assist you in disinfection of your water well.

### Q: Are there any other safety hazards associated with flooded water wells?

A: Yes. Older water wells may be located within well pits or basements. Under flooded conditions, this may result in electrical hazards. Additionally, covers of well pits may be dislodged, leaving submerged, uncovered vaults. Avoid walking through flood waters.

Submerged well pits and associated components should be evaluated by a Licensed Water Well Installation Contractor when flood waters have receded. Do not enter a well pit or vault.

**RELATED LINKS:**

**Private Water Supplies**

<https://www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department/environmental-health/private-water-supply>

**Potable Water Educational Materials: After the Flood brochure, Disinfection of Water Well Calculation sheet, Licensed Water Well Contractors list, among many other helpful materials**

<https://www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department/environmental-health/private-water-supply/potable-water>

**If you have any additional questions please contact the McHenry County Department of Health Division of Environmental Health at 815-334-4585.**