RILEY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# Disinfection of Drilled or Driven Wells

### Steps to Disinfection

1. If the well has an electric pump, turn off all electricity and clear debris from around the top of the well

2. Repair the electrical systems and pump as needed.

3. Start the pump and run water until it is clear. Use the outside faucet closest to the well to drain potentially contaminated water from the well and keep unsafe water outside of interior plumbing. If there is not pump, bail water from the well until water is clear

4. If the well is connected to interior plumbing, close valves to any water softener unit

5. Use the table below to determine the amount of liquid bleach needed to disinfect the well. Use only unscented bleach

| | Diameter of Well Casing | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Depth of Water** | **2 inches** | **4 inches** | **6 inches** | **8 inches** | **10 inches** | **24 inches** | **36 inches** |
| 10 Feet | 0.75 tbsp | 3.25 tbsp | 0.5 cup | 0.75 cup | 1.25 cups | 7 cups | 1 gal |
| 20 Feet | 1.5 tbsp | 6.5 tbsp | 1 cup | 1.5 cups | 2.5 cups | 14 cups | 2 gal |
| 30 Feet | 2.25 tbsp | 9.75 tbsp | 1.5 cups | 2.25 cups | 3.75 cups | 1.25 gal | 3 gal |
| 40 Feet | 3 tbsp | 13 tbsp | 2 cups | 3 cups | 5 cups | 1.75 gal | 4 gal |
| 50 Feet | 3.75 tbsp | 1 cup | 2.5 cups | 3.75 cups | 6.25 cups | 2.25 gal | 5 gal |
| 100 Feet | 7.5 tbsp | 2 cups | 5 cups | 7.5 cups | 12.5 cups | 4.5 gal | 10 gal |
| Tbsp = tablespoon | | 1 cup = 8 fluid ounces = 16 tablespoons | | | | 1 gallon = 16 cups | |

6. Using a 5-gallon bucket, mix the bleach from the table with 3-5 gallons of water

7. Remove the vent cap

8. Pour the bleach-water mixture into the well using a funnel. Avoid all electrical connections. Attach a clean hose to the nearest outside faucet and use it to circulate water back into the well for thorough mixing

9. Rinse the inside of the well casing with a hose or bucket for 5-10 minutes

10. Open all faucets inside the home and run the water until you notice a strong odor of chlorine (bleach) at each faucet. Turn off all faucets and allow the solution to remain in the well and plumbing for a minimum of 12 hours

11. After at least 12 hours, attached a hose to an outside faucet and drain the chlorinated water onto an area without plants or other vegetation. Continue draining until the chlorine odor disappears. Avoid draining into open sources of water

12. Turn on all indoor faucets and run water until the chlorine odor disappears

13. Until well water has been tested, boil it before use or use another alternative water source. Wait at least 7-10 days after disinfection to test; testing cannot be completed until all chlorine has been flushed from the system

**NEXT PAGE**

For more information, visit:
https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wellsdisinfect.html

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Wells contaminated with fuel or toxic chemicals will not be made safe by disinfection

Contact the Environmental Health Specialist at Riley County Planning & Development at:
**785-537-6332**

Water will be tested for total coliform and either E. coli or fecal coliform bacteria to confirm the water is safe to drink; if results show no presence of total coliforms or fecal coliforms, the water can be considered safe to drink.

Follow up tests are required; one in the next 2-4 weeks, and another in 3-4 months

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