

Well Water Quick Tips and Maintenance Log

Pollution from sources like septic systems, farm animals, farm chemicals, and naturally occurring chemicals can contaminate the water in your private well. To be sure the water is safe to drink, it is important to take good care of your well and have the water tested for contaminants. This log will help you keep track of maintenance needs. Well water can be inexpensive and healthy, but your well needs to be maintained for the safety of you and your family.

Quick Tips

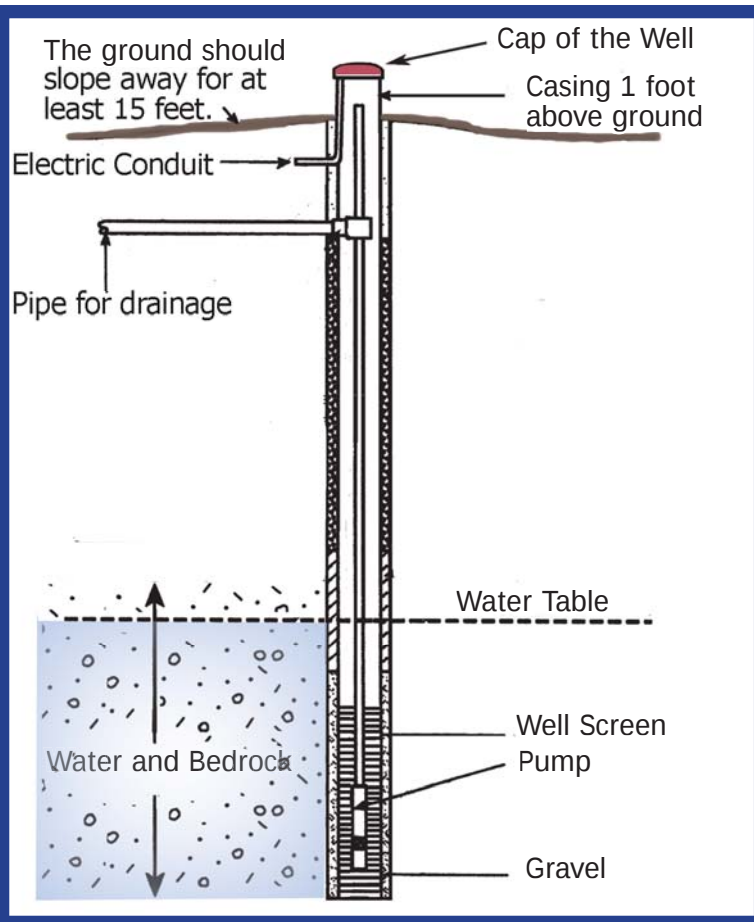
Wellhead

Inspect your wellhead several times a year. To inspect your wellhead, check the well covering, casing and well cap to make sure there are no cracks where contaminants can enter into the well.

Well System

Have a qualified well driller or pump installer inspect the well system every 10 years. If you do not know how old your well system is, then have it inspected now. The well system includes the pump, storage tank, pipes and valves.

Not all wells are the same.
Below is an example of how most wells are built. You should get familiar with your well and all of its features.



Water Testing

You should test your water immediately if:

- you do not have any recent test results
- anyone in the house is pregnant or nursing and you do not have recent test results
- you notice any change in the color or odor of your water
- the neighbors find a contaminant in their well
- there are any chemical or fuel spills near your well
- there has been any flooding near the well — flood water can contaminate the well system

Know Your Results

Water Test Results Summary

Each year you should test your well for bacteria and nitrates. The table below shows typical contaminants, how often you should test your well water for them, and when to treat your well. If you live in an agricultural area and/or you have underground fuel tanks, it is recommended that you also test your well water for pesticides and/or petroleum. You should also get your water tested if it tastes, smells, or looks strange.

Type of Contaminant	How Often You Should Test	Treat if the Well Water Test Shows:
Bacteria	Once a year	bacteria are present
Nitrate	Once a year	10 mg/L or higher
Nitrite	Once a year	1 mg/L
Arsenic	Once every 3 to 5 years	0.01 mg/L or higher
Uranium	Once every 3 to 5 years	0.03 mg/L or higher
Fluoride	Once every 3 to 5 years	4 mg/L or higher

mg/L = milligrams per liter of water

Typically, the lab results will tell you the level of a contaminant in your water. The table above shows at what level you should treat your water. If you have contaminant levels higher than those in the table, you should fix the problem. If you do not understand your test results, don't hesitate to call the lab that tested your water and have them explain the results to you or call your local public health district.

If contaminants are found in your well water, there are many home water treatment options available that will disinfect (i.e. shock chlorination) or filter (i.e. reverse osmosis) your well water. Consult your local public health district or visit NSF International on the web at www.nsf.org/consumer/drinking_water/selecting_dwtu.asp?program=WaterTre for help in choosing the best method for your well.



What You Can do to Protect Your Well Water

Septic System Testing

Poorly maintained septic systems pose a serious threat to the quality of your drinking water and can require expensive repairs. To maintain your septic system you should:

- inspect the septic tank each year to determine how much the tank can hold and if there are any leaks.
- pump out the tank every three to five years
- repair the tank drainfield system, as needed, to prevent leaks of bacteria and nutrients into your drinking water

*Be aware of well
contaminant sources like:*

- *septic systems*
- *leaking underground fuel tanks*
- *landfills*
- *industrial spills or discharges*
- *animal waste*
- *fertilizers*
- *pesticides*



Preventing Well Problems

- Keep water runoff from pooling around the well by placing/installing your well in an elevated area of your property.
- If your well is more than 30 years old, have it inspected by a qualified well driller to make sure the casing is in good condition.
- Install anti-backflow devices on all faucets with hose connections or maintain an air space between hose or facet outlets.
- Have your fuel tank(s) tested for leaks, especially if underground.
- Do not use gasoline products, solvents, pesticides or excessive amounts of fertilizers near your well.
- Do not hit the casing with any objects, such as a lawn mower or vehicle.
- Do not tie animals to the well casing. Animal waste close to the well can contaminate the water and the animal could crack the casing.
- Make sure there are no abandoned wells within 600 feet of your working well.

Your Well System Log

Use this table as a guide to check your well system.

Date	March 2, 2010				
Casing is water tight (check that there is no water and mud around your wellhead and lush plant growth due to water seepage)	Yes				
Casing is at least 1 foot above the ground	Yes				
Ground slopes 15 feet away from wellhead	Yes				
Well cap is water tight (check that your compression ring and gasket are in working order, cap is tight and bolts are secured)	Yes				
Water tested and report stored	Yes				
Well shock chlorinated (to find out how to shock chlorinate visit http://www.water-research.net/shockwelldisinfection.htm)	Yes				
Backflow prevention is used / working (If it is not working there might be changes in the color or odor of your water)	Yes				
Who did well check or service?	Owner				

Use this table to keep track of which contaminants were tested.

Date	Bacteria Results	Nitrate Results	Fluoride Results	Arsenic	Uranium	Other Tests	Laboratory
April 30, 2009	Tested No Bacteria	Tested 60 mg/L		Tested 0.07 mg/L			ID Laboratories

Use this table to keep track of your treatment system device.

Treatment System	Brand / Model #	Manufacturer Phone #	Cost	Date Installed	Maintenance Date

Health District Contact Information

Panhandle Health District
208-415-5200
www.phd1.idaho.gov
(serving Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Shoshone counties)

North Central Health District
208-799-3100
www.idahopublichealth.com
(serving Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce counties)

Southwest District Health
208-455-5400
www.publichealthidaho.com
(serving Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette and Washington counties)

Central District Health
208-375-5211
www.cdhd.idaho.gov
(serving Ada, Boise, Elmore and Valley counties)

South Central Public Health District
208-737-5900
www.phd5.idaho.gov
(serving Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls counties)

Southeastern Idaho Public Health
208-233-9080
www.sdhdidaho.org
(serving Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Butte, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power counties)

Eastern Idaho Public Health District
208-522-0310
www.phd7.idaho.gov
(serving Bonneville, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton counties)

Idaho Department of Water Resources

Licensed Well Drillers
www.idwr.idaho.gov/apps/well/licensedwelldrillers/

Ground Water Protection Section,
Boise: 208-287-4800
www.idwr.idaho.gov

Northern Region, Coeur d'Alene: 208-769-1450

Eastern Region, Idaho Falls: 208-525-7161

Southern Region, Twin Falls: 208-736-3033

Western Region, Boise: 208-334-2190

Idaho Department of Agriculture

Water Program
Boise Office 208-332-8597
www.agri.state.id.us

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Bureau of Community and Environmental Health
1-866-240-3553
www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov
bceh@dhw.idaho.gov

Idaho Bureau of Laboratories
208-334-2235
www.statelab.idaho.gov
statelab@dhw.idaho.gov

NSF International

Consumer Hotline 1-800-673-8010
www.nsf.org

