

DISINFECTION OF PRIVATE WELLS

When coliforms are found in a well water sample, the Barnstable County Department of Health and the Environment recommends that the well and distribution system be chlorinated.

The procedure for proper chlorination is as follows:

1. Locate the wellhead and remove an access plug or bolt so that the area within the well casing is exposed.
2. Using a funnel, pour in an appropriate amount of liquid chlorine bleach. **(CAUTION!! DO NOT USE SCENTED OR PERFUMED BRANDS OF BLEACH. THESE CAN LEAVE BEHIND A RESIDUE IN THE WATER)**

CHLORINE BLEACH DOSAGE FOR WELL DISINFECTION

WELL DEPTH	GALLONS OF BLEACH
Less than 100 ft.	1/2 to 1 gallon
100 to 200 ft.	1 to 1-1/2 gallons
200 to 300 ft.	2 gallons
300 and above	2-1/2 gallons or more

3. Using an outdoor faucet and garden hose, allow water to run through the funnel and into the well for about two hours to circulate the chlorine through the well and disinfect all fittings and equipment.
4. Remove garden hose and funnel and recap well.
5. To disinfect the plumbing, turn on each faucet inside and outside (one at a time) until the chlorine odor can be detected at each faucet. This ensures the entire system will be disinfected.
6. Allow the chlorinated water to remain in the plumbing system out of use for 24 hours. **WARNING! THE WATER IS HEAVILY CHLORINATED. DO NOT USE FOR DRINKING, COOKING, WASHING, BATHING OR IRRIGATION.**
7. After 24 hours flush all faucets until the chlorine odor is gone and the water is clear of debris and color. Flush outside faucets first to avoid overloading your septic system.
8. To ensure proper disinfection retest your well for coliform bacteria using a bottle which contains sodium thio sulfate, (available at the lab).

NOTE: A single disinfection may not be sufficient for heavily contaminated wells. In such cases this procedure should be repeated.