

LENAWEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
1040 S WINTER ST, STE 2328
ADRIAN MI 49221-3871

DISINFECTING A WELL

Do not drink or use this water for human consumption until you have a safe (non-detect) bacteriological sample result. Any well may become bacteriologically contaminated. Usually contamination occurs during repairs on the well or other construction procedures. However, for reasons unknown, older wells become contaminated and require disinfecting. Disinfecting may be accomplished by the use of ordinary liquid laundry bleach, 5.25% Sodium Hypochlorite or Calcium Hypochlorite powder. For the average home well, one (1) gallon of bleach will be adequate.

The procedure for the entire operation is outlined below:

1. Check the well seal and vent pipe to be certain of good, tight construction. Replace any worn or damaged parts. To prevent contamination, a well must be constructed properly and in good working condition.
2. Mix one (1) gallon of bleach with 3 or 4 gallons of water. The water drawn from the contaminated well is satisfactory. As the solution is poured directly into the casing, be sure to splash it around so that the inside of the casing is washed. Check again to see that the vent and seal are in good working order before closing the well. When using hypochlorite powder, it is best to follow the directions that come with the product purchased. *Do not use the chlorinated water for skin contact until the disinfecting odor disappears, and after flushing on the following morning.*
3. Turn on each water faucet throughout the entire distribution system and allow the water to run until you smell the disinfecting agent at each tap.
4. Turn off taps and allow the solution to stand in the water lines for two hours. Then run each tap for ten seconds, close again and allow to stand overnight.
5. On the following morning:
 - a. If you have public sewers, run each tap until the disinfectant odor disappears.
 - b. If you have a septic system, connect a garden hose to an outside faucet and run the water into a road ditch until the disinfectant odor disappears.
6. After most of the water has been released in the above manner, again turn on each faucet to release the disinfectant residual in the immediate locality of the faucet.
7. Collect a water sample for bacteriological analysis, after all chlorine is out of the water distribution system. *It is recommended that bottled water be used for consumption until a safe (non-detect) bacteriological sample is obtained.*

DUG WELL: For dug wells, pump the water to waste until it is clear. Then estimate the amount of water in the well (in gallons) and add one (1) quart of any of the common laundry bleaches to each 50 gallons of water in the well. Mix the chlorine with water in the well by stirring with a long stick. Allow at least 2 hours contact and then pump the well to waste. Collect a water sample for bacterial analysis, after all chlorine is out of the water distribution systems.