



ALBANY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

175 Green Street

Albany, NY 12202

518-447-4649

Well Disinfection Guidance

Once your well is drilled and fully developed (i.e. pumped clear), it must be disinfected. Albany County Health Department will then complete and evaluate water quality samples prior to recommending safe household use.

A concentrated bleach solution needs to be circulated through the well and house plumbing to assure proper disinfection of the well and plumbing before use of the well water. Below is a step-by-step method to sanitize a well before use. It is recommended that a NYSDEC Registered Water Well Contractor be hired to disinfect your well.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY – EXTREME CAUTION IS ADVISED WHEN DISINFECTING A WELL

Electricity near water can be dangerous. Before you do anything to the well:

1. Shut off power to the pump and water system.
2. Examine for broken wire insulation or missing wire nuts and repair as necessary.
3. Wear rubber-soled shoes or boots, preferably waterproof.

Materials

7-8% Sodium Hypochlorite Bleach
Do not use "splashless," scented, or gel

5-gallon
bucket

Hose

Appropriate clothing
Rubber-soled shoes, work clothing

Procedure

1	Attach a hose to the outdoor faucet that is closest to the well or pressure tank. The hose must be long enough to reach the well. Run water until it runs clear.
2	Use about 1 quart of household bleach for every 100 feet of well depth, 2 quarts will typically be sufficient if the depth is unknown. The bleach must have an active ingredient of about 7-8% sodium hypochlorite on the label. Do not use "splashless," scented, or gel variety bleach. Mix 1 quart with 5 gallons of water in a large bucket in the area close to the well casing.
3	Turn off the electric power to the well pump (the switch is probably located at the circuit breaker box or near the pressure tank). Carefully remove the well cap (and well seal if there is one). Set aside.
4	Turn the electric power to the well pump back on. Place the opposite end of the hose into the casing. Turn the faucet with hose on.

5	Pour the water and bleach mixture down the open well casing while the water is running through the hose. Continue running the water through the hose placed inside the well casing.
6	Run the water at each indoor and outdoor faucet until a chlorine odor is present. Then shut off each faucet (except the faucet with the hose).
7	Continue running water through the hose and down inside the well casing to recirculate the chlorine solution. Use the hose to also wash down the inside of the well casing.
8	After one hour of recirculating the water, remove the hose from the well. Shut off the faucet that the hose is connected to and make sure all the other faucets are still shut off to assure the pump is stopped. Remove the hose from the well.
9	Mix another batch of bleach and water. Use about half a gallon of the mixture to rinse and disinfect the well cap (and seal if there is one). Turn off the electric power to the well pump. Pour the remaining mixture into the well. Replace the well cap (and seal).
10	Allow the well to stand idle for at least 8 hours, preferably 12 to 24 hours. Avoid using the water during this time. The electric power to the pump must remain off.
11	After allowing the well to stand idle for at least 8 hours, turn the electric power to the well back on.
12	Purge the well and plumbing of the chlorinated water by: a. Connect a hose to an outside faucet and place the other end of the hose away from grass and shrubbery. b. Open the faucet and run the water until the chlorine odor disappears. c. Open all the other indoor and outdoor faucets until the chlorine odor disappears.

Sampling

After disinfection is complete and there is no more chlorine odor, contact the Albany County Health Department at (518) 447-4649 to arrange for water sampling.