

IS MY WELL WATER SAFE?

Tips to Protect Your Well Water



IS MY WELL PROPERLY BUILT?

Private wells can provide a clean, safe source of water if they are properly located, built, and maintained. To protect your well from contamination and to make sure it follows Idaho well regulations, you should have your well drilled by a licensed well driller. To find a licensed driller in your area contact the Idaho Department of Water Resources (numbers are on the back of this brochure).

HOW DO I TEST MY WELL WATER?

A certified lab or your local health district may be able to test your well water for contaminants. Staff will tell you how to collect your water sample and costs for the tests. Contact your local health district for information on testing your well (numbers are on the back of this brochure).

WHAT CONTAMINANTS SHOULD I TEST FOR?

Idaho well water may contain several harmful contaminants. The table shows typical contaminants, how often you should test your well water for them, and treatment levels. If you live in an agricultural area and/or you have underground tanks with petroleum, 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.

WHAT DO THE TEST RESULTS MEAN?

Typically, the lab results will tell you the level of a contaminant in your water. The table above shows what levels are considered safe. If you have contaminant levels higher than those in the table, you should fix the problem. If you have pesticides or petroleum in your water please call the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW, number on back of brochure) for information on what test results mean.

WHY SHOULD I TEST MY WELL?

Once you are sure that your well has been properly located and built, it is your responsibility as a private well owner to ensure that the water is safe. Sources such as septic systems, farm animals, farm chemicals, and naturally occurring chemicals can contaminate your well water. High levels of contamination can put your and your family's health at risk. Make sure your well water is safe by testing it.

Type of contaminant	When to test	When To Treat
Bacteria	Once a year	Treat any amount
Nitrate	Once a year	If 10 mg/L or higher
Nitrite	Once a year	If 1 mg/L or higher
Arsenic	Once every 3 to 5 years	If 0.01 mg/L or higher
Uranium	Once every 3 to 5 years	If 30 µg/L or higher
Fluoride	Once every 3 to 5 years	If 4 mg/L or higher

mg/L = milligrams per liter of water
µg/L = micrograms per liter of water

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



HOW CAN I FIX A PROBLEM?

If you have a problem, you may need to disinfect your well, repair your system, find an alternative drinking water source, and/or install a water treatment device to remove contaminants. When installing a treatment system look for NSF International certified treatment devices. Your local public health district can help you determine the best method to fix the problem.

HOW DO I KEEP MY WELL WATER SAFE?

Well maintenance is very important to keep your water safe. For treatment devices, follow the manufacturers' suggested maintenance schedules. It is also recommended that once a year you check your well covering, casing, and well cap for cracks and look for other areas where pollutants could enter your water. A "system maintenance log" can help you keep track of any water test results, as well as any construction and contractor details. A copy of a log is available by calling IDHW.