

# FLOODED WELL?

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## *What You Need to Know*

## HOW CAN I TELL IF MY WELL COULD BE IMPACTED BY FLOODING?

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Private wells that are susceptible to flooding or potential contamination include:

- Wells that are older, completed in areas now designated as floodplains
- Wells in which the casing is not finished above the high-water level
- Wells not adequately capped or sealed, or older wells with shallow grout or insufficient surface seal
- Wells in areas structurally unstable, or where previous erosion or subsidence has compromised the structure and landform
- Wells with an abnormal affinity for bad luck.

Well rehabilitation, relocation, and elevation may be long-term options for wells impacted by rising water levels, but in the short term for any well that has been flooded, or is suspected of having been influenced by floodwaters, it needs to be viewed as unsafe for potable use until the well has been evaluated and tested to make sure it's safe for use as drinking water.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO ENSURE MY WATER IS SAFE AND PREVENT INJURY?

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Bacterial contamination is common following a flood, so disinfection and wellhead repair are important to ensure safe drinking water. We recommend taking the following steps before and after flooding to protect your well:

- Do not drink the water or wash with it, instead, use an alternative supply such as bottled water
- Stay away from the well pump while it's flooded to avoid electrical shock

**Get a qualified water well contractor or pump installer to —**

- o Clean and turn on the pump
- o Flush the well
- o Disinfect the well
- o Perform any necessary maintenance
- Check with your local emergency management agency about any guidance relating to local conditions or specific contamination threats due to area flooding.



## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

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- Well owners can search for NGWA-member or NGWA-certified professionals at WellOwner.org under “Find a Professional.”
- Other resources for well owners in flood situations can be found in the “Water Quality/Quantity” section of WellOwner.org.
- NGWA also has an online resources page for both well owners and water well system professionals to aid them in recovery following a flooding event. While the page focuses on flooding due to hurricanes, the information is relevant for any flooding situation.