IS MY WELL WATER SAFE?

Tips to Protect Your Well Water

HEALTH DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION

Panhandle Health District
208-415-5200
www.phd1.idaho.gov
(serving Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Shoshone counties)

Public Health - North Central District
208-799-3100
www.idahopublichealth.com
(serving Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, and Nez Perce counties)

Southwest District Health
208-455-5400
www.swdh.org
(serving Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette and Washington counties)

Central District Health Department
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.siphidaho.org
(serving Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Butte, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power counties)

Eastern Idaho Public Health District
208-522-0310
www.eiph.idaho.gov
(serving Bonneville, Clark, Custer, Fremont, Jefferson, Lemhi, Madison, and Teton counties)

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

Licensed Well Drillers
research.idwr.idaho.gov/apps/wellconstruction/Licwelldrillers/

Ground Water Protection Section
Boise: 208-287-4800
www.idwr.idaho.gov

Northern Region, Coeur d’Alene: 208-762-2800
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 & WELFARE

Bureau of Community and Environmental Health
1-800-445-8647
environmentalhealth.dhw.idaho.gov
bceh@dhw.idaho.gov

Idaho Bureau of Laboratories
208-334-2235
www.statelab.idaho.gov
statelab@dhw.idaho.gov

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
208-373-0502
www.deq.idaho.gov

NSF INTERNATIONAL
Consumer Hotline 1-800-673-8010
www.nsf.org

This publication was supported by the Grant or Cooperative Agreement Number, 1 NU61TS000286-01-00, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.
IS MY WELL PROPERLY BUILT?
Private wells can provide a clean, safe source of water if they are properly located, built, and maintained. Use a licensed well driller and follow the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) requirements for drilling a well (numbers are on back). To protect your well from contamination, you should follow inspection tips on the “system maintenance log” found online at environmentalhealth.dhw.idaho.gov.

WHY SHOULD I TEST MY WELL?
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 you and your family’s health at risk. Make sure your well water is safe by testing it.

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. If your well is damaged or flooded, or if you notice significant changes in taste, smell, or color, get your well re-tested for contaminants.

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

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

WHAT DO THE TEST RESULTS MEAN?
Typically, the lab results will tell you the level of a contaminant in your water. The table 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.

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. It is 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. For treatment devices, follow the manufacturers' suggested maintenance schedules. 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 online at environmentalhealth.dhw.idaho.gov.