



# Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services

## DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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### Procedure for Disinfecting Wells

Disinfection of a well is recommended to eliminate disease causing organisms and other organisms, which can and sometimes do grow in wells. The latter causes clogging and can affect the quality of the water produced.

A well should also be disinfected following repair, maintenance or replacement of the pump. For a new well, disinfection should be conducted following development, testing for yield and installation of the pump. When there is a delay in pump installation, interim or partial disinfection should be undertaken.

Disinfection generally involves at least six steps:

1. Remove the threaded inspection plug from the cap on top of the well. Place a funnel in this entry port and pour one (1) to three (3) gallon of domestic or household bleach such as Clorox, Purex, etc. into the well, depending on the size of the casing and depth of the well.
2. Open all faucets until the odor of chlorine is detected at water outlets, including faucets or fittings, sprinklers, drip lines, irrigation lines, etc. Do not forget the shower head, dishwasher and toilets.
3. Close all outlets and allow water to remain in all water lines and well, preferably overnight or longer, if possible. Limit water usage during these critical hours.
4. The next day, open all outlets until the odor of all chlorine has disappeared. The water supply should then be free of chlorine.
5. Have the water re-sampled for bacteriological quality.

*Note: Disposal of the chlorinated water should be away from trees, shrubs, or lawns and into storm sewers, drainage ditches, etc. Such water should not be flushed into the plumbing system of homes that use individual septic tanks.*

6. Test results:
  - a. The absence of bacteriological contamination is usually a sign that the problem has been corrected. Sampling at a later date is recommended to verify that the contamination has not returned.
  - b. If bacteria is still present, the water must still be considered unsafe to drink. It is then recommended that you contact a licensed well driller or other qualified professional to discuss potential corrective actions.