



North Island Laboratories

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Well Disinfection Instructions

A well system should be disinfected whenever you construct, repair, or determine that the water system is contaminated with disease causing microorganisms.

Pour "no-name" household bleach (5% chlorine) into your well. Check the appropriate amount to be added using the following chart.

Wait approximately 1-2 hours for the bleach to mix in the water column of your well. The deeper the well the longer it takes.

Keep in mind that the bleach solution will only disinfect the inside of the well up to the existing water line.

Run an outside hose bib periodically to check if the bleach has mixed in the well. Once you can smell the chlorine solution, you can then run all the taps inside your house until you smell the chlorine solution and then turn off the taps. This way, you are effectively disinfecting your home's entire water system.

Open the valve or plug at the top of the pressure tank just before stopping the pump to allow the chlorine solution to contact the entire inside surface of the tank. Then, close the valve or plug.

Let the chlorine solution sit in your water system for a minimum of 24 hours.

Do NOT drink, brush your teeth, bathe, do laundry or cook with your water during the entire 24 hours. Bleach is an irritant and the concentrations used for this process can cause severe reactions. It is only safe to use your water for flushing the toilets during this period.

Pump out the majority of the bleach solution using an outside tap and garden hose onto a grassy area. **Do NOT discharge into a ditch or a stream, as this will kill anything living in the ditch or stream.**

Pump out the bleach solution until the chlorine odour disappears. The amount of time this takes (hours to days) is dependent upon the recovery rate of your well. Be careful, especially if you have an above ground pump, not to run your well dry.

We recommend waiting a minimum of 10 days, preferably after a rainfall event, before retesting. This allows the well to recover and time to see if it is a reliable source of drinking water.

Factors such as cloudiness, high levels of iron, manganese and hydrogen sulphide will limit the chlorine's effectiveness to disinfect the system. In extreme cases, this process may need to be repeated.

The BC Ministry of Health Services advises that private well water systems should be monitored for bacterial contamination a minimum of twice per year. Typically the worst time of year for bacterial contamination of wells is immediately after the first rains in the fall.

Diameter of Well Casing		Amount of Bleach per Well Depth	
Inches	Centimetres	Per 10 feet	Per 3 Metres
4	10	4 teaspoons	20 mL
6	15	10 teaspoons	50 mL
8	20	7 tablespoons	100 mL
10	25	10 tablespoons	150 mL
12	30	13 tablespoons	200 mL
24	60	3.5 cups	800 mL
36	90	2 quarts	2.3 L
48	120	3 quarts	3.4 L
60	150	5 quarts	5.7 L
72	180	7 quarts	8.0 L