



WASHINGTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1302 Pennsylvania Avenue • Hagerstown, MD 21742

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Flooding and your Well and Septic

What should I do if my septic tank or field is flooded?

If your septic tank and/or field lines are underwater, then **do not** use any running water in the house. Running water, flushing toilets, etc. increases the water load in the tank and field lines. Once the flood waters have subsided around the tank and lines, continue to conserve water until the soil has had a chance to dry. After the water has receded, have your tank inspected by a certified professional and have the tank pumped. If you need a list of certified professionals, contact the Washington County Health Department's Division of Environmental Health at 240-313-3400. Ensure vehicles and/or heavy equipment do not drive over the septic area at any time to prevent further damage.

What should I do if my well is flooded or under water?

If your well is flooded, **do not** use the water until the water has been tested and deemed safe. Use bottled water if available. Once the water has receded, the well should be chlorinated to sanitize the water and plumbing supply lines. It is recommended the well cap be replaced with a flood-proof cap to prevent future contamination. Well caps can be obtained from a certified well driller. Chlorination instructions can be obtained from the Washington County Health Department's Environmental Health Division by calling 240-313-3400. After chlorination, the water should be tested to ensure it meets potability requirements or is safe to drink.

My well did not flood, but my water looks and/or tastes different after recent flooding in my area.

If you notice a change in your water quality after heavy rains, your well water may be impacted by the flooding. Use bottled water if available. It is recommended that the well is chlorinated and tested to ensure potability requirements or is safe to drink, especially if your water is now cloudy or has an odor.

My water looks okay and does not taste different; is it safe to use?

Bacteria and viruses cannot be seen in water. Testing the water to ensure potability or safety is recommended.

I still have more questions or concerns; who can I talk to?

If you have questions, need further assistance, seek lists of certified professionals, etc., please contact the Washington County Health Department's Environmental Health staff at 240-313-3400. Staff are available Monday through Friday from 8 am until 5 pm.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
1302 Pennsylvania Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740