

Nonpublic Household Water Well Recommendation #3: Establish Triggering Events to Inspect Wells and Test Water Quality

Proposed Action

Nonpublic household water well users will have their well(s) inspected and the quality of their well water tested after the triggering events included in the table below.

and/or can lead to potential contamination of groundwater. In these situations, to ensure the water is safe for household purposes, nonpublic household water well owners and users should have their wells inspected and the water quality tested.

Potential Funding

Funding to support this recommendation would most likely come from a combination of sources including: nonpublic water well users, state funding, local and state taxes and fees, fertilizer and pesticide sales, and local water well permits.

Why This Action Is Needed

Requiring inspection and water quality testing of a nonpublic water well can provide protections to nonpublic well water owners and users. This is especially important for owners/users whose well water has never been tested for quality, especially bacteria and nitrates. For some triggering events in rural areas, the water likely needs to be tested for pesticides, whereas the water likely needs to be tested for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in urban areas.

Background Information

Various events create conditions which can compromise the structure of a nonpublic water well

Water Quality Tests

- Bacteria and nitrates
- VOCs and/or pesticides
- Others (if identified by environmental health professional)

Triggering Events

- Well construction
- Putting an inactive well back into active status
- Any property transaction (transfer of ownership, leasing or rental, or refinancing), unless a physical well inspection *and* water sample/analysis has been conducted within the previous 12 months and meets state/local standards and no other intervening triggering event has occurred
- Environmental encroachment from nearby source of contamination
- Waterborne emergency, as determined by the responsible local or state health agency. Waterborne emergencies include, but are not limited to the following: chemical or biologic contamination of the well's groundwater source or flooding of the well head.

Water Quality Tests

- Bacteria and nitrates
- Others (if identified by environmental health professional)

Triggering Events

- Well reconstruction
- When the physical integrity of the well is compromised (e.g. such as by a falling tree, vehicle collision, flood)
- Flooding of wellhead
- Occurrence of a waterborne disease outbreak

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