

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) encourages residents to take precautions during and after the flooding that has occurred in some areas of the state, including protecting their drinking water. Flooding can cause the contamination of water with fecal matter from sewage systems, septic tanks, as well as contamination from oil, gasoline and other chemicals.

At present, the safety of most municipal water supplies has been preserved, however many private drinking water wells may have been contaminated by the floodwaters. Heavy precipitation tends to mobilize bacteria and thus highlight conditions of poor well construction. DES urges all private well owners whose well has been flooded to boil their water for drinking and to have their well water quality tested after the floodwaters have receded.

How to make sure your drinking water is safe:

- Disinfect and test flooded private water wells after floodwaters recede.
  - To [request a test container from the DES Laboratory](#), please contact 271-3445.
  - For information on disinfection of private wells, please go to [Disinfecting A Private Well](#)  (DES Fact Sheet).
  - For information on proper construction of private wells, please go to [Bedrock \(Artesian, Drilled\) Well Design](#)  – for bedrock (artesian, drilled) wells (DES Fact Sheet)  
[Dug Well Design](#)  – for dug wells (DES Fact Sheet)  
[Point Well Design](#)  – for point wells (DES Fact Sheet).
- Safe water for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene includes bottled, boiled, or treated water. Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, wash hands, or make baby formula.
- If you use bottled water, be sure it came from a safe source. If you do not know that the water is from a safe source, you should boil or treat it before you use it.

Note: The DES water lab was merged with the Division of Public Health Lab as of July 1, 2011, however revision of e-forms is in process and DES e-forms are still being used.