



Clinton County Health Department

Paula Calkins Lacombe, Director of Public Health
133 Margaret Street, Suite 117, Plattsburgh, New York 12901-2968



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

“Working Together for a Healthier Community”

Health Information Line: (518) 565-4490 Web: www.clintonhealth.org

Environmental Health Unit **Director:** John Kanoza, P.E., C.P.G. **Phone:** (518) 565-4870 **Fax:** (518) 565-4843

Clinton County Health Department Press Release Drinking Water Safety After a Flood August 4, 2010

Areas in Ellenburg, Chazy and Altona were impacted by flash flooding on Tuesday night. After flooding, private well owners should take actions to ensure their private well water supply is safe for consumption. When a water supply well has been affected by flood waters, the water within the well may be contaminated with waterborne pathogens (germs) that can cause serious illness in humans and pets. If you believe that your well has been contaminated, discontinue using your well water for drinking and cooking purposes, and use only disinfected or bottled water. Contact the Clinton County Health Department for fact sheets and instructions on proper clean-up, disinfection and sampling to make sure your drinking water is safe. Drinking water wells can also be contaminated by fuel oil or other chemical products released during the flood (such as from home oil tanks and agricultural tanks). **If you believe your well may be contaminated by petroleum or other chemicals, do not use your well and immediately contact your local Health Department or the Department of Environmental Conservation Spill Hotline at 1-800-457-7362.**

A flood will leave warning signs that a well may be unsafe. Below are some things that a well owner can look for, any one of these signs may indicate that a well is contaminated. Most private wells have the pump located inside the well casing and submerged, so well owners will probably not be able to inspect the pump. Well owners should contact a qualified professional, registered well driller or pump contractor, to evaluate and service well pumps.

1. Is the well located in or near the area that was flooded? If you did not see the area during the flood, debris and mud in the area and water or mud stains on the well can indicate that the well was flooded.
2. Is the ground surface around the well intact and stable? During flooding the ground around the well may erode, possibly creating unsafe conditions or a pathway for surface water and contaminants to enter the well.
3. Are there any electrical components or wires visible? Visible electrical wires may be dangerous and should be avoided due to electrical shock. If electrical connections or controls located outside the well casing remain submerged, turning on the pump may cause electrical shock or damage to the system. A qualified electrician should be contacted.

4. Is any damage to the well casing visible? A bent or cracked well casing may allow surface water, sediment and debris to enter the well and will increase the risk of contamination.
5. Is the well cap and seal securely fastened to the well casing? A loose well cap can allow sediment and debris to enter the well and contaminate it.

If you determine that your well has been flooded, do not turn on your well pump until the well has been assessed and repaired as needed. **Do not** drink or wash with well water until the well has been restored by proper disinfection and flushing. For more information please contact the Clinton County Health Department at 518-565-4870 or the web at www.clintonhealth.org for well disinfection steps.

Endorsed By: _____

Paula Calkins Lacombe
Director of Public Health

