

# Private Wells After The Fire

**As an owner of a private domestic well affected by a wildfire you may have some concerns about the safety of your water supply. Following are actions you can take to ensure that your well water is safe to drink.**

## **Inspecting Your Well**

The first step to ensuring your water is safe to drink is to perform a visual inspection of your well and all other pipes and appurtenances. Look for damage to any equipment such as chlorinators, filters, tanks, piping, wiring, connectors, well houses or other structures. If any damage is found, contact a licensed contractor or trade worker to make repairs.

## **Identifying Loss of Pressure**

Turn on a faucet in the household. The flow of water should be steady and uninterrupted. The sound of air escaping from the faucet, with water intermittently spurting out when it is turned on, is an indication that your well system had a loss of pressure.

A loss of pressure means that your water is at higher risk of contamination. Have your water tested for bacterial contamination before using it for drinking and cooking.

## **Flush the System**

If your water tastes or smells earthy, smokey or burnt, replace or service filters and other water quality treatment systems. After the filters or treatment has been serviced, you should thoroughly flush your water lines until there is a noticeable change in color, temperature or 15 minutes has passed—whichever happens first.

## **Getting Your Water Tested**

If your drinking water system has been depressurized, test the water for the presence of bacteria. Contact a laboratory about pricing, how to collect the sample, and where to return it once you have collected it. To obtain a list of drinking water testing labs, contact Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) at 602-364-0720.

## Using Water While Waiting for Test Results

You can use your water for showering and flushing toilets. However, avoid swallowing water from showers or baths. Do not use your water for drinking (including water for pets) or cooking purposes, including washing dishes or other cooking utensils, until you have boiled or disinfected it.

## Boiling or Disinfecting Drinking Water

If boiling is not practical, you can use common household bleach with 5.25% sodium hypochlorite (check the label) for disinfecting. Avoid bleach with scents or perfumes. Follow instructions on the label for disinfecting drinking water, or use guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): [epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/emergency-disinfection-drinking-water](http://epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/emergency-disinfection-drinking-water)

## Disinfecting Your Well

If the laboratory reports that your water has bacterial contamination, you should disinfect your well.

1. 1.5 cups of bleach (5.25% sodium hypochlorite) into well
2. Wait 30 minutes
3. Open taps at farthest ends of system until you smell chlorine. Then close all taps.
4. Let well stand 24 hours without pumping
5. Open taps and flush all water lines until a chlorine odor is no longer detectable

For more details, visit: [cdc.gov/disasters/wellsdisinfect](http://cdc.gov/disasters/wellsdisinfect)

## Questions? Contact ADEQ

Main Office (Phoenix) | 602-771-2300 or  
Southern Regional Office (Tucson) | 520-628-6733

Visit [naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory](http://naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory) to find your local county health department contacts, or search in the blue pages of your local phone book.

*For translations or other communications aids, please email the Title VI Coordinator at [Bingham.lan@azdeq.gov](mailto:Bingham.lan@azdeq.gov).*

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