

WELL OWNER TIP SHEET: FLOODING

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY WELL COULD BE IMPACTED BY FLOODING?

As Michael Schnieders, PG, PH-GW, noted in his September 2014 Water Well Journal article wells that are susceptible to flooding or potential contamination include:

- Older wells completed in areas now designated as floodplains
- Wells in which the casing is not finished above the high-water level
- Wells not adequately capped or sealed, or older wells with shallow grout or insufficient surface seal
- Wells in areas structurally unstable, or where previous erosion or subsidence has compromised the structure and landform
- Wells with an abnormal affinity for bad luck.

Any well that has been flooded or is suspected of having been influenced by floodwaters should be viewed as unsafe for potable use until such time the well has been evaluated and tested to make sure it is safe for use as drinking water.



WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY WATER AND PREVENT INJURY?

Bacterial contamination is common following a flood, so disinfection and wellhead repair is important to ensure safe drinking water. Well relocation and elevation may be other options for wells impacted by rising water levels. NGWA recommends taking the following steps before and after flooding to protect your wells:

- Do not drink the water or wash with it, instead, use an alternative supply such as bottled water
- Stay away from the well pump while it's flooded to avoid electrical shock
- Get a qualified water well contractor or pump installer to :
 - Clean and turn on the pump
 - Flush the well
 - Disinfect the well
 - Perform any necessary maintenance
- Check with the local emergency management agency about any guidance relating to local conditions or specific contamination threats due to area flooding.



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