WELL DISINFECTION

After a well is constructed and pumped clear, or after any improvements are made to the water system, or routine sampling has detected the presence of coliform bacteria, it should be disinfected with chlorine bleach. Bleaches containing 5.25% available chlorine are sold in grocery stores under such names as Clorox, Purex, etc.

The following steps should be taken to disinfect the well:

1. Mix 2 quarts of bleach in 10 gallons of water. Pour this solution into the well while it is being pumped. Keep pumping until the chlorine odor appears at all taps. Re-circulate the water back into the well for at least an hour utilizing a hose attached to an outside hose bib. Water from the hose should be directed around the well casing allowing the water to flow down the inside of the casing. Then close the tap and stop the pump.

2. Mix 2 more quarts of bleach in 10 gallons of water and pour this chorine solution into the well. Before replacing the well seal disinfect it by immersing it in a chlorine solution of 1 quart of bleach in a 5 gallon pail of water. Allow the well to stand idle for at least 8 hours and preferably 12 to 24 hours.

3. Pump the well to waste, away from grass and shrubbery, through the storage tank and taps, such as an outside connection, until the odor of chlorine disappears. The chlorine may persist in the water system for 7 to 10 days depending on how much water is used.

After all the chorine is pumped out (possibly 7 to 10 days), a water sample should be collected and tested by a certified laboratory (see our listing of certified laboratories located elsewhere on this website) to determine whether all contamination has been eliminated. Be sure to make prior arrangements with the laboratory to pick up a sterile sample bottle and complete instructions for sampling.

Remember that disinfection is no assurance that water entering the well is free of pollution.