

## How do I boil or disinfect water for temporary use?

### Choose bottled water until you know your water source is safe.

- If you cannot use bottled water, boil the water you will be using for drinking and cooking for 2 to 5 minutes.
- If you cannot boil water, use common household liquid bleach to disinfect drinking water.
  - ◊ Use 2 drops of liquid bleach per quart of water.
  - ◊ Make sure the bleach is free of perfumes and added scents.
  - ◊ The disinfected water should have a slight chlorine odor; if not, add one more drop of liquid bleach.
  - ◊ Mix thoroughly and allow to stand for 30 minutes before using the water.



## Checklist for Well Owners

Follow the detailed instructions in this pamphlet to make sure your water is safe to drink.

1. Check for damage to your water system.
2. Protect your well by covering the casing.
3. Check for signs of a loss in water pressure.
4. Get your water tested.

### Resources for More Information

You can get answers to any additional questions you have regarding your private domestic well and the quality and safety of your water by contacting the following agencies:

**Tennessee Department of Health**  
866-327-9105

**Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation**  
888-891-TDEC  
615-532-0183



Department of Health Authorization No. 343474  
Number of copies, 1000. This public document  
was promulgated at a cost of \$.20 per copy. 12/16



## Well Water Safety After a Fire

Tennessee  
Department of Health



As an owner of a well affected by a fire, you may have some concerns about fire-related impacts to your well.

Ensure your well water is safe to drink by following the directions in this pamphlet.

## 1. Check for damage to your water system.

- Turn off your power and check all the items below for any damage:
  - ◊ Electrical wires and connectors which supply power to your well.
  - ◊ PVC or plastic pipes used to bring water to your home.
  - ◊ Well houses and equipment such as chlorinators, filters and controls.
  - ◊ Pressure tanks, storage tanks, vents and overflow pipes.

**If any damage is found, have your water tested and contact your well installer to repair the damage.**

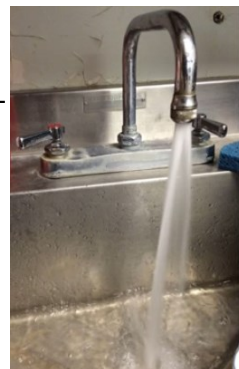


## 2. Protect your well.

If your well cap is damaged, cover the well casing and the area surrounding the casing to keep animals, falling limbs and other debris from entering the well.

## 3. Check for signs of a loss in water pressure.

- Check to see if your water system maintained pressure during the fire by doing the following steps.
  - ◊ Turn on a faucet to see if water comes out.
  - ◊ Listen for any air being released from the faucet.
  - ◊ Watch the flow of water. It should be steady and uninterrupted.
  - ◊ If you hear air escaping from the faucet or if the water spurts out instead of flowing steadily, your system had a pressure loss and you should have your water tested before using it.
- Check to see if your water tastes or smells earthy, smoky or burnt. If so, you may need to flush your water lines by letting the water run until it tastes and smells normal.
- If you don't have enough water to do these checks, contact your well installer.



## 4. Get Your Water Tested:

TDH is offering water testing to residents affected by the fires. Free testing of home well water for Gatlinburg-area residents who have been directly impacted by fires will be provided.

People returning to homes in the next few weeks with a functioning well will be tested first.

Those properties requiring more extensive repair or restoration before they can be lived in will be tested later.

**Call the Tennessee Department of Health, toll-free 866-327-9105, or send an email to [ep.response@tn.gov](mailto:ep.response@tn.gov) if you want your private well tested.**

## Can I Use My Water While I'm Waiting For Test Results?

- You **can** use your water for showering and flushing toilets.
- **Do not** swallow water while showering or bathing.
- **Do not** use your water for drinking, cooking, washing dishes, making ice or making baby formula unless you have boiled or disinfected it.
- For added protection, use alcohol-based sanitizer to wash your hands.
- Generally, pets can safely consume water containing more bacteria than humans. Check with your vet with additional questions.

