

# **INFORMATION OF INTEREST TO PRIVATE WATER WELL OWNERS**

## **1. Bacteriological Examination**

The Brazos County Health Department laboratory can test the water for the presence of Coliform bacteria. The proper collection procedure and the interpretation of the test are given in the attached packet.

A proper collection is very important since poor collection will result in an unsatisfactory test requiring a repeat test (and payment).

We perform a test which is specific for the detection of Coliform bacteria because they are easy to identify and their presence is indicative of possible contamination problems. This is the test required for public drinking water.

## **2. Signs of Bacterial Contamination of Water**

Contaminated water may have an odor of rotten eggs due to gas produced by the bacteria. The water may be off-color, taste bad or have a slippery feel. It is entirely possible that water may be contaminated and have none of the above signs and in fact taste and look perfectly good.

## **3. Possible Sources of Contamination**

Except for very rare instances, the underground water supplies in this area are not bacteriologically contaminated. Any contamination found in well water is almost certain to have come from some outside source.

A brand new well is very likely to be contaminated with bacteria until it has been properly treated. This is because the drilling apparatus, pipes, pumps etc are not sterile and will introduce bacteria during the drilling process. A major source of contamination during drilling is the use of highly contaminated water for lubrication and cooling during drilling. This water is often taken from stock tanks, ponds, lakes etc. If you have a well drilled, insist that the driller truck in clean potable water to use, it will save a lot of problems later.

There are probably no wells that are completely sealed against all possibilities of outside contamination. Tiny insects, spiders, dust, rainwater all can crawl or seep around minute openings and introduce bacteria which can then multiply to the point of causing a problem.

Care must be taken when using the well to furnish water for stock tanks, ponds, watering troughs, gardens, etc. If the end of the water line is on the ground or beneath a standing water surface, bacteria will migrate up the line and contaminate the well.

In case of well contamination household bleach is an effective treatment. This procedure is included in the packet.

#### **4. Filters**

Filters are designed to remove particulate matter, minerals, chemicals, pesticides, odors and/or color from the water. Filters may not kill or remove bacteria from the water system. Different filters may be able to temporarily stop the movement of the bacteria but the contamination may build up at the filter until it works around the seals and back into the water supply.

#### **5. Buying, Selling or Re-Financing Property with a Private Well Water Supply**

Most lending institutions require that a property not on an approved public water supply have the water on the property checked for bacterial contamination. It is a good idea to have this done at least a month before the closing date, to give time to treat the well if needed and then re-test.

If there is a septic system on the property, it must also be inspected by a licensed inspector. If you have need of such an inspector, call the Environmental Health Services division at the Brazos County Health Department.

#### **6. Drillers and Installers**

All reputable well drillers and installers are registered with the Texas State Well Drillers Board. If you wish to inquire about a particular company or individual, the telephone number is (512) 371-6299.