

Starting Up Your Seasonal Water System

Maine CDC Drinking Water Program • 11 SHS, Augusta, ME 04330 • 287-2070 • www.medwp.com

There are many water systems that operate for only part of the year. Examples include: campgrounds, boys and girls camps, restaurants, sporting camps, ski areas, golf courses, and motels. These systems often open and begin serving drinking water to the public after hibernating for part of the year. If you operate a seasonal system, follow the steps below to help avoid problems with your system.

✓ **Inspect your well:** If the well cap is not a sanitary sealed well cap or it's loose, take off the well cap and check to see if spider webs or insects are inside. If so, clean them out with a shop vacuum. Bugs can get in your water and cause bacteria to spread in your water system. If your well cap does not seal, replace it with a new one. With the new Ground Water Rule now in effect, you also need to have a sample tap before your pressure tank, so you can collect source samples, should you receive a positive coliform result.

✓ **Disinfect the system:** Water in your pipes and in your well sits over the winter and stagnates. If you've drained the system, there's a good chance that bacteria have moved in. You can kill those bacteria by adding bleach to your well. The bleach that you use must be approved for disinfecting drinking water (regular Clorox® has this approval). We have guidance for disinfection on our website at www.medwp.com (click on "Resources, Guidance, and Information" and then on "Well Shocking Fact Sheet"). Many systems break apart sections of water lines in the fall to ensure they are drained. You can help speed up disinfection by adding bleach directly into the water pipes before re-connecting the pipes.

✓ **Run your well to fill the system:** Turn on faucets at the ends of the system to get chlorinated water into all of the pipes. After you can smell chlorine coming out of the taps, shut the water off and let it sit overnight. Chlorine works best if it is allowed to stay in contact with contaminated materials for a long time.

✓ **Flush the chlorine out:** After you have let your water sit overnight, turn on the faucets and let them run. This will help to move the chlorinated water out of the system. Use a hose to direct the chlorinated water to places where it won't damage vegetation or surface

water. Don't flush chlorinated water into your septic system because the chlorine can kill the 'good' bacteria in your septic system.

✓ **Flush your tanks:** Be sure to drain and refill your water storage tanks to remove rusty water and ensure that the valves still work. Continue flushing until the water is no longer discolored.

✓ **Walk your pipes:** If you have lines that run over the ground, take a walk around to make sure that they are not leaking. Leaking lines can pull bacteria into your drinking water and can increase your power costs because you'll be pumping water that you don't use. It can also run your well dry when you least want it.

✓ **Wait a week before taking bacterial samples:** We strongly encourage collecting an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) bacteria sample after the above steps have been taken to assure that the system disinfection was adequate and complete. O&M samples do not count toward annual testing requirements. If the samples are "bad" they will not count against you, but if the results are good you cannot use the results for compliance purposes.

✓ **Collect your initial compliance samples within 30 days** of opening as required by the State Drinking Water Regulations. Refer to the Annual Testing Requirements Letter that was mailed to your system for the required water tests and frequencies that will be due during the operating season.

If you have any questions regarding the drinking water requirements for your system, call your Compliance Officer at the Drinking Water Program at 287-2070.



Keep Your Drinking Water Safe:

✓ Protect Your Source

✓ Take Your Samples

✓ Maintain Your Treatment

✓ Inspect Your Pipes & Tanks