



Drought

Private Wells and Natural Disasters

Safety Reminders

Drought and extreme heat affect groundwater availability and quality. Aquifers are not easily monitored, which makes it important to understand the natural cycle of groundwater levels in your well. Deeper wells are generally less affected by drought, but they may take longer to recover after one occurs. Shallow wells, especially those close to the surface, are more vulnerable to water shortages. Being proactive and informed will allow for more effective management of your well. To be prepared, understand your well type, know its location, and familiarize yourself with critical well components.

These tips can help you respond effectively and facilitate a smoother recovery.

- Get help from a licensed well contractor (LWC). Contact your local health department, department of environmental quality or natural resources, or a university extension service to obtain a list of contractors in your area.
- Use bottled water or a stored water source to brush teeth, drink, cook, and bathe until you know



the concentration of groundwater constituents (chemicals) and changing how groundwater and surface water interact.

If you live in a drought-prone area, take these steps to protect your private well.

- Obtain a copy of your well construction log, if possible.
- Know and document all components of your private well. Take photos of the connections and system components. These photos will be helpful if components need to be replaced or to file insurance claims. Make sure to include:
 - Storage or pressure tanks
 - Pump
 - Treatment system (including any filters)
 - Electrical components
- Know your well's depth and the intake setting of your pump.
- Store all well-related documents in an easily accessible location.
- Store possible contaminant sources away from your well. This may include chemicals, fertilizer, and flammable materials such as paint, gasoline, solvents, or paper.
- Keep the well cap and sanitary seal in good condition.
- Keep extra well caps and sanitary seals on hand in case they are damaged.

Before a Drought

Essential Steps to Take

- Buy and store safe water, such as bottled water, to use for drinking, cooking, and bathing for three days.
- Have contact information for a LWC, your local health department, university extension service, and water testing laboratory.
- Take advantage of available water conservation rebate programs.
- Consider water-saving measures including the following:
 - Rain sensors, drip irrigation, native plants, or dormant lawns.
 - Repair leaking plumbing fixtures or replace them with water-saving plumbing fixtures.
 - Hauled water storage tanks as a temporary or permanent additional supply.
 - Larger or additional pressure tank to store more water.
 - Visit [EPA's Watersense](#) to learn more on how to save water and protect the



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Look for any gaps around the outside of the well casing. The grout may have been damaged, or the casing may have large cracks.

Remove any debris entering uncovered wells or storage tanks.

These next steps will help to determine the quantity of available well water.

Open any closed shut-off valves, including any shut-off valve before or after the pressure tank.

Turn the power back on to the pump. The pump should start pumping water into your water system and the pressure in the pressure tank should start to increase as it fills.

If the pump will not start, turn off the electricity and contact a LWC to evaluate your system.

Step 2: Clean and Flush Well

Use the following checklist to clean and flush your well before testing your water to determine if disinfection is needed.

Check that power to the well pump is off at the breaker box.

Temporarily cap the well if the well cap or casing are damaged. Use a sanitary seal or wrap a sheet of 6-millimeter plastic tightly around the wellhead and secure tightly with two zip ties.

Contact a LWC for permanent repairs.

Remove debris around the outside of the wellhead.

Turn off the water going to the rest of the system if there is a shut-off valve and faucet before or after the pressure tank.

Turn the pump on if there are no issues.

If the pump will not start, turn off the electricity and contact a licensed well contractor.

Flush the well by running the pump until the water runs clear. Use an outside faucet and a hose

to direct the water away from the septic system, public sewer, or driveway. Do not use the hose to clean the driveway or sidewalk. Do not use the hose to clean the driveway or sidewalk. Do not use the hose to clean the driveway or sidewalk.



