



WELLS: CARE AND MAINTENANCE

A well in Hancock County can be a major investment since it frequently requires drilling several hundred feet to find adequate water. Here are some hints on how to protect your investment, assure your well operates safely and your family stays healthy:

1. Use a state-licensed well driller and pump installer when constructing or servicing your system. A list can be found at: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/eng/water/licensing/drillers/WDandPIIist.htm> ;



2. Have your water tested periodically by a state-licensed water tester. For an up-to-date list of labs certified for water testing: call the Maine Lab Certification Officer at: 207-287-1929 or go to: <http://wellwater.maine.gov> The state can also help interpret the results of the test.



3. Some experts recommend yearly testing, but it is definitely recommended after the well has been serviced or there is a change in color, taste or odor. But remember just because the water tastes fine does mean that it is safe to drink. It is also recommended when you are expecting a baby, installed a treatment system or new parts such as pumps or pipes, and if the well has run dry and comes back; The best time to test a year-round well is at the end of summer. For a seasonal home, the best time is at the beginning of the season.

4. Store hazardous materials, such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides, and motor oil far away from the well;
5. Avoid paving areas adjacent to the well and be sure that there is an adequate distance between the well and areas such as dog runs or horse corrals;
6. Periodically check the well cover cap on top of the well casing to confirm it is in sound condition; If it has been damaged, there is an increased likelihood of contamination and the water should be tested;
7. When landscaping, keep the top of the well at least one foot above the ground and ensure that the ground slopes away from the well so surface water does not drain into the well;
8. Take care not to damage the well casing when mowing. Avoid piling snow, yard trimmings, leaves or other material near the well.



What About Arsenic in Wells?



Arsenic has been reported at over the level deemed safe by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in wells in several Hancock County towns (Blue Hill, Otis, and Surry). Since 2002 the safe level has been 0.01 milligrams per liter of water. Arsenic in excess of safe levels leads to an increased risk of certain types of cancer, low birth weight, stomach and intestinal irritation, nervous system disorders, blood vessel damage, and abnormal heart rhythm. If you live in area where there are reports of arsenic in the water, you may want to have your water tested.

The Maine Bureau of Health Recommends that you stop drinking or preparing food with well water. Arsenic is quickly removed from the body. Some of the health effects go away or diminish several days after use of water with high levels of arsenic ends. *Do not boil your water since it only increases arsenic levels.*

There are various water treatment systems available that remove arsenic from the water. These systems cost between \$500 and \$3,000. The type of system you need will depend on your particular situation. Consult a water treatment specialist before investing in a system. *Be sure to retest the water after the treatment system has been installed.* For more information on treatment systems contact the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Drinking Water Program at 207-287-3194.

What About Radon Gas?



Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. High levels of radon gas occur naturally in Maine soil and water, and can move into a house from the ground. The house then traps the radon in the air

inside. Radon gas can also dissolve into well water, which is then released into the air. Simple air and well water tests can show whether home radon levels meet state and national safety guidelines.

Any house can have a radon problem. It doesn't matter if it's old or new, or where it's located. The only way to know if your house has a problem is to test.

For more information, contact www.MaineRadiationControl.org or call 1-800-232-0842 radon.dhhs@maine.gov TTY: 800-606-0215

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Hancock County Planning Commission
395 State Street
Ellsworth, ME 04605
207-667-7131
207-667-2099 (fax)
hcpc@hpcme.org
www.hpcme.org