



Using Well Water after a Wildfire

After a wildfire, your well water may be contaminated with bacteria and chemicals that can make you sick.

Contamination can come from the fire itself, from products used to fight the fire, and from chemicals that seep into the water supply if items such as oil tanks are damaged. If the fire reached your property, the well itself may be damaged.

First steps after a wildfire

Stop using your well water for drinking, cooking, and washing yourself.

Remember: drinking water includes water used for drinking, making formula, juice, and ice cubes; washing fruit and vegetables; and brushing your teeth.

Repair your well, if needed. Hire a certified well contractor to check your well. You can find a list of well drillers and diggers and a list of pump installers at <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/wellcontractors.asp>

To prepare your well for testing, follow these steps:

1. Flush the well. Run a tap until the water runs clear
2. Disinfect the well. Find instructions on our website at <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/DisinfectWaterWell.pdf>
3. Flush the well again. Make sure that you run the tap long enough to flush all the disinfectant from the well
4. Test the water for bacteria before you use it for anything other than household cleaning. Find a list of water testing labs at: <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/waterlabs.asp>
5. Test the water for chemicals if
 - a spill occurred near your well, such as from a damaged oil tank
 - firefighting occurred near your well, such as water bombing
 - the water is cloudy or has an unusual smell
 - two years have passed since the last chemical test

After the test results

If the water does not run clear or the test shows bacteria or chemicals in your well, contact Nova Scotia Environment for advice

Visit our website at

<https://novascotia.ca/well-water-testing/> for information on how to make sure your well water is safe and how to read the results of a water test or call your local Environment office at **1-877-9ENVIRO (1-877-936-8476)**