



Division of Environmental Health

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TROUBLESHOOTING CHECKLIST FOR COLIFORM CONTAMINATION

Coliform bacteria in a water system are generally either a result of a failure to maintain a “closed” water system and/or a treatment failure. Visually inspect the system for “openings” and/or treatment equipment failures. Look for areas of the system where soil, leaves, insects, birds, sewage, or animal wastes could possibly get into your water system. Use bleach solution to sanitize equipment or pipes before installation or repairs.

CHECK THE FOLLOWING

WELLS

- Well casing is above the floor or ground and the area around the well is clean.
- Well has a watertight seal and has a U-shaped, inverted, screened (minimum 24 mesh) vent.
- There are no openings in the well cap or casing, including around the electrical wires.
- There is no standing water around the source.
- The well is at least 100 ft. from sources of contamination such as septic tanks, drain fields, sewers, manure, or garbage.
- The well has been effectively disinfected following any well or pump repairs.
- A dug well has a watertight lid with overhanging edge and a neoprene-type seal between the lid and the well casing.

SPRINGS

- The collection box and hatch or lid is watertight. The hatch should have an overhanging edge and a neoprene-type seal.
- Vents are covered with an insect-proof non-corroding screen (minimum 24 mesh).
- Overflow and drain lines are screened or protected with an angle flap valve.
- Surface water is directed away from the spring collection area by a diversion ditch.
- Springbox and surrounding area is free of trees, shrubs, and woody growth.
- The spring is at least 100 ft. from sources of contamination such as septic tanks, drain fields, sewers, animal enclosures, or garbage.

TREATMENT

- Filters are not clogged.
- Chlorine residual is measured and levels are adequate.
- UV or ozonation system is operating correctly and the lights, filters, etc. have been maintained properly.

HYDROPNEUMATIC and BLADDER TANKS

- Tank(s) are not waterlogged.
- Sediment has not accumulated in the tank.
- Bladders are intact and functional.

RESERVOIRS and STORAGE TANKS

- There are no openings that allow entry of surface water, debris, insects, etc.
- The access hatch has an overlapping, watertight cover and a neoprene-type seal.
- Vents are clean, directed downward, and screened (minimum 24 mesh).
- Overflow and drain lines are protected with screens or angle-flap valves and discharge aboveground. The drainpipe should not be submerged in non-potable water.
- There are no signs of dirt, insects, growth, sediment, or debris inside the tank.
- There are no cracks, leaks, or vegetative growth on the outside of the tank.

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

- There are no obvious leaks or breaks.
- The system has been properly disinfected following any construction or repair work.
- There have been no low pressure or water outage incidents.
- Non-looped, dead-end sections are regularly flushed.
- System is free of possible cross connections.

AFTER INSPECTING SYSTEM

- Make needed repairs and improvements.
- Disinfect and flush the system according to Humboldt County Division of Environmental Health (DEH) guidelines.
- Install sample taps at source and storage facilities, if needed.
- Establish or improve preventative maintenance program (routine sanitary survey, treatment equipment and tank inspection, and distribution system flushing).

For further information, contact the Division of Environmental Health at (707) 445-6215.