

To the residents of Usk, Old Remo, New Remo, Dutch Valley and outlying Terrace areas, affected by flooding.

Private Drinking Water Well Testing

Availability June 13 to June 23, 2022

What is the purpose of this program?

Privately owned and operated wells in areas affected by floods may have become contaminated or damaged by the flooding, leading to unsafe water. The program will provide testing for safety.

- In flood impacted areas, well water should be considered **not fit for human consumption** until the well is assessed and the water is disinfected and tested ([see below under more information](#))
- Northern Health is offering bacteriological testing (i.e., *E. coli*) for private drinking water wells affected by the recent flooding events
- Testing will help well owners determine the bacteriological quality of their water and thus, suitability for human consumption
- The program may be extended and will be reassessed based on flooding episodes

Who is eligible?

To qualify, one of the following criteria must be met:

- The well must be located in an area directly impacted by flooding during the 2022 flooding events. This may include those private well owners impacted by an evacuation order or an evacuation alert

Important notice:

If you have a private surface water intake used for drinking water, contact your health authority for information on eligibility.

What services are being offered?

This initiative is limited to the following services for owners of private drinking water wells:

- Northern Health will facilitate sampling for private well owners by providing pickup and drop off locations for bacteriological samples for transportation to approved laboratories. At this time, full sample bottles dropped off at the Terrace Health Unit.
- Environmental Health staff will offer help in interpreting water testing results

Limitations

Limitations of the program may include the following:

- Testing will be offered until June 23, 2022. This date could change depending on need.
- Testing is limited to bacteriological testing. (This does not cover chemical testing. If you smell gas or suspect other chemical contamination you need to refrain from consuming water and contact a laboratory that does chemical testing. See [Government of British Columbia: Directory of Qualified Laboratories](#))
- Any work required to be done on the well to make it safe is the responsibility of the well owner and may require hiring a qualified person ([see below under more information](#))

How do I participate?

Step 1. Confirm Eligibility

You must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The well must be located in an area directly impacted by flooding during the 2022 flooding events. This may include those private well owners impacted by an evacuation order or an evacuation alert
- If you have a private surface water intake used for drinking water, contact your health authority for information on eligibility

Step 2. Disinfect your well

- Flooded wells need to be disinfected prior to sampling. For information on disinfecting wells, see: [Government of BC: Water Well Disinfection - Using the Simple Chlorination Method \(PDF 3.5MB\)](#).
- If your private water supply has treatment installed, it must be functional before taking the sample

Step 3. Pick up sample kits according to directions from your health authority (see below)

- Sample kits will include bottles, instructions and requisition forms. Health authorities will provide pick up and drop off locations as follows:

Northern Health Authority

The following locations are for pick up and drop-off of sampling bottles.

Terrace Health Unit	3412 Kalum Street Terrace, BC V8G 4T2	Monday Tuesday Wednesday	8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
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For more information, please contact Public Health Protection at 250-565-7322.

Questions may also go to this e-mail address php@northernhealth.ca

Step 4. Take samples and fill out requisition forms

- Please see [Water sampling procedure](#) to correctly take and transport samples
- It is critical that samples are taken correctly, transported appropriately and in a timely fashion, and that the requisition form accompanying your samples is filled out correctly so the lab can contact you to provide accurate results. Your health authority can help you if you have any questions

Step 5. Drop off samples

- Samples can be dropped off as per instructions under Step 3 above

Step 6. Receiving results

- Testing laboratories will make every effort to contact you directly by phone when there is detectable *E. coli*. All other reports with non-detectable *E. Coli* will be sent out to you either from the testing laboratory or through the health authority. Please note it is the

responsibility of the private well owner to decontaminate their well when there is detectable *E.coli* counts

- If *E. coli* is not detected, further testing will not be required for that site. If *E. coli* is detected, it is recommended to investigate the problem before re-submitting a new sample for testing. Up to one re-sample will be accepted. Testing may be extended if circumstances warrant.

Further information on what result means can be found here:

- [Government of BC: Total, Fecal & *E. coli* Bacteria in Groundwater \(PDF 180KB\)](#)
- [Well Water Testing \(HealthLinkBC file #05b\)](#)

Step 7. Taking Further Action

- A well driller or pump installer registered with the Province can be hired by a well owner to inspect and repair/rehabilitate their well. A list of qualified persons is found at: [Government of BC: Groundwater Wells and Aquifers](#)
- For existing wells, a well owner may disinfect their own well if they choose to do so. Proper care for and maintenance of your water supply well, including regularly testing the water quality, can help ensure that you have a safe and sustainable water supply

Further information on taking care of your well can be found at:

- [Government of BC: Care for and Maintain Your Water Supply Well](#)
[Government of BC: Best Practices for Dug Wells](#)

More Information

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Flood zones are danger zones](#)
- [Disinfecting Drinking Water](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Increased risk of contamination to drinking-water wells in Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Information for Property Owners](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Well Water Disinfection](#)
- [Well Water Testing](#)