



Erie County Health Department
An Accredited Public Health Department

Erie County Community Health Center
A Federally Qualified Health Center

Peter T. Schade, MPH, RS
Health Commissioner



The Erie County Health Department offers this advice for cleaning and disinfecting cisterns and wells. Call the health department for a sample and bacterial analysis as soon as the chlorination procedure has been completed.

Cisterns or Hauled Water Storage

1. Pour five gallons of plain household bleach into the cistern or tank for every 1,000 gallons of capacity. A 1,500-gallon tank will need 7.5 gallons of bleach.
2. Open **all taps** throughout the water system until the water smells like chlorine.
3. Shut **all taps** off and allow the water to stand at least 8 hours without use. Through the day when no one is home or overnight are suggested.
4. Open all taps and allow them to run until the chlorine odor disappears. Run as much water through the outside faucet(s) and into the yard as is possible to avoid overloading the sewage system. The odor may not disappear until another fresh load of water has filled the tank or cistern.
5. Refill the cistern or tank with fresh water. Wait until the chlorine odor is gone before calling for a sample.

Wells

1. Remove the well cap or the vent pipe or plug if the well is equipped with a sanitary well seal.
2. Pour one gallon of plain household bleach directly into the well.
3. Connect a hose to a house spigot and run water directly into the well until chlorine odor is present in the water. Run the water this way for 15 minutes.
4. Shut off water supply to hose and proceed to systematically open each water fixture in the house. Let water run through each fixture until chlorine odor is present. Include both cold and hot water valves.
5. Close all valves and pour another one gallon of bleach directly into the well. Recap the well or replace the vent pipe or plug. Leave all valves closed for a period of 12 hours or longer (toilets may be flushed if needed).
6. Open the hose spigot and discharge water to ground surface or drainage ditch until chlorine odor disappears. Open every household fixture and let water run until the chlorine odor is gone. This can take several hours.
7. The well should now be properly disinfected.

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