SUMMER 2024

wellcare® Hotline: 888-395-1033

Dear Well Owners Network Member:

Summer is just about here! Bring on warmer weather, June bugs, cookouts, and the rest of your favorite summer activities. Unfortunately, along with summer comes natural disasters. We hope you won't have to deal with these unfortunate events, but if you do, we have updated our **Emergencies Agencies** webpage, all of our information sheets, and cover emergencies and your well throughout this newsletter. We also discuss potential contamination from natural disasters like total dissolved solids (TDS) and the latest on PFAS. We have even included a fun science experiment for the kids to do during their summer break! Psst…it involves dancing!!

If you have questions regarding these topics, if you cannot find what you're looking for, or if you have any other questions on wells and well water, the **wellcare®** Hotline can help! Contact the **wellcare®** Hotline at 888-395-1033 or **wellcarehotline.org**. Don't forget to like us on **Facebook**, follow us on **Twitter**, and subscribe to our **YouTube channel** for videos, extra tips, industry news, and more!

Emergencies (Flooding, Drought, Wildfires! OH MY!) and Wells

With hurricane season beginning on June 1st, natural disasters and emergencies are on our minds. If a natural disaster has occurred on or near your property, there are some things you need to know about your drinking water supply. Throughout the articles some cautions may be redundant, however, they are important to reiterate for each natural disaster. If there are concerns about your water supply, follow local or state health department drinking and bathing advisories.

Moving flood water or high winds can carry large debris that could loosen well hardware, dislodge well construction materials, or distort casing. Coarse sediment in flood waters could erode pump components. If the well is not tightly capped, sediment, debris, and flood water could enter the well and contaminate it. Wells that are more than ten years old or less than 50 feet deep are likely to be contaminated, even if there is no apparent damage. Floods or heavy debris may cause some wells to collapse.

Remember that there is a danger of electrical shock from any electrical device that has been flooded. Rubber boots and gloves will **NOT** protect you from electrical shock. **DO NOT** turn on the equipment until the wiring system has been checked by a licensed electrician, well, or pump contractor.

In most emergency situations, procuring bottled water is the most promoted way to access safe drinking water. However, if the water only needs to be disinfected to be potable, there are four main options to treat water to make it safe for consumption:

- **Boiling**
- **Chlorination**
- **Distillation**
- **Water treatment devices certified for microbial reduction of bacteria, cysts, and viruses**

DO NOT rely on water treatment filters or devices that are **NOT** certified for microbial reduction as they may not provide the protection necessary for emergency situations. Consult a water professional or manufacturer for more information.

Septic systems should not be used immediately after floods. This is because drain fields will not work until underground water has receded. Septic lines may have been broken

during flooding or other storms. If flooding has occurred for you, contact a local septic service immediately. Only trained specialists should clean or repair septic tanks because tanks may contain dangerous gases.

Prepare yourself in advance by downloading our FREE **wellcare®** information sheet on **Emergencies & Disasters and Wells** and by finding emergency agencies in your state using our **Emergency Agencies interactive map**. You can also view our **short video on YouTube**.

The **wellcare®** Hotline can also help! Our friendly staff members are available to answer your questions and provide you with any information you need to maintain a safe water supply. Contact us by calling 888-395-1033 or chat with us live at **wellcarehotline.org**.

Managing a Flooded Well

If you live in an area that was recently flooded, your private well may be in danger of contamination from pollutants carried by flood water or at risk of shock from waterlogged well equipment. Here are some steps you should follow after a flood:

- **Do not drink or wash with your well water. You could get sick from contaminants carried into the well by the flood.**
- **Do not turn on the well pump. There is a danger of electrical shock and damage to your well or pump if they are flooded.**
- **Contact your licensed well contractor for help in dealing with the impacts of the flood on your water quality and well system.**

You should suspect well water contamination any time your well casing becomes flooded, if your well is shallow and you are near areas that have been flooded, or if you notice taste, color, or sediment changes in your water. Find a safe alternative source for drinking, cooking, and washing until a water test proves your well water is safe.

Many times, when your area experiences flooding or a natural disaster, your local health department or state environmental agency will provide free or low-cost testing for well owners. If free or low-cost water testing is not available, please contact the **wellcare®** Hotline at 888-395-1033 or visit our **Well Water Testing** web page.

Download our **wellcare®** information sheet on **Managing a Flooded Well** for more information.

Disinfecting Your Well

If your system checks out okay following a flood, it will likely require disinfection before the system can be used. We recommend using a licensed well contractor to perform

the disinfection procedure. However, if you must perform the procedure yourself, our instructions can be used. Please read all cautions before proceeding. ***Note: The instructions provided by your local or state environmental agencies supersede our instructions.***

Download our Disinfecting Your Well instructions.

Drought and Wells

Summer can also bring drought conditions that can result in problems for your water well. We have provided steps below to manage water levels and help prevent your well from going dry:

- Measure water levels - Knowing the exact yield of your well is critical to managing the use of water or considering options to expand the supply.
- Manage water levels - If you have a low-yielding well (producing less than five gallons per minute), you should be very careful how much demand you place on it. Conserve water as much as possible. Read our **Water Conservation** information sheet for ways to save water around your home.
- Add water storage - Adding storage can help

Wildfires and Wells

Wildfires are becoming more frequent and the risk of them increases in extremely dry conditions, such as droughts, heat waves, and during high wind conditions. As a result, you will see an increase in wildfires during the summer months.

After a wildfire, underground well components like the pump may not be harmed. However, if your home and yard have been burned, it is necessary to complete a visual inspection of your well system and have any damage repaired by a licensed well contractor before turning on the water.

Check the following for damage:

- Wellhead – casing, cap or seal, and any other above ground piping
- Tank – pressure or storage tanks (cisterns)
- Electrical – wires and control box

provide greater capacity when water levels are low and allows your well to recharge. It also helps prolong the life of your well pump since it reduces the need for your pump to cycle as often.

It is also a good idea to discuss low flow concerns and well components that can help with your **licensed well contractor** before it gets to this point. There are pressure switches designed for low-yielding wells and floats and sensors to help shut the system off when the water level drops.

Download our **wellcare®** Information Sheet on **Drought and Your Well** for additional tips on managing your well during a drought.

Additional **wellcare®** information sheets that may be helpful during drought:

Coping with Low Water Levels
What to Do If Your Well Runs Dry

- Treatment – filters/housing, tanks, chemicals
- Septic System – although underground and most likely to be unharmed by fires, it is still important to visually inspect for damage

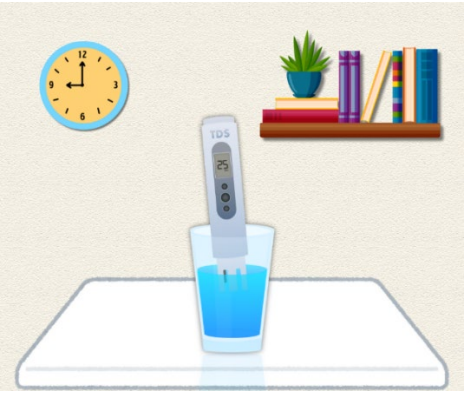
If any damage is observed, contact your licensed professional immediately for repair.

Contamination concerns are from chemicals and microorganisms that can enter a damaged well. **Use our interactive map on our website** to locate water test resources. **Even if you haven't been affected by a wildfire, National Water Quality Month is coming up in August! Take the time to ensure your water quality is safe for you and your family.**

Download our **wellcare®** Information Sheet on **Wildfires and Wells** for additional tips.

Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)

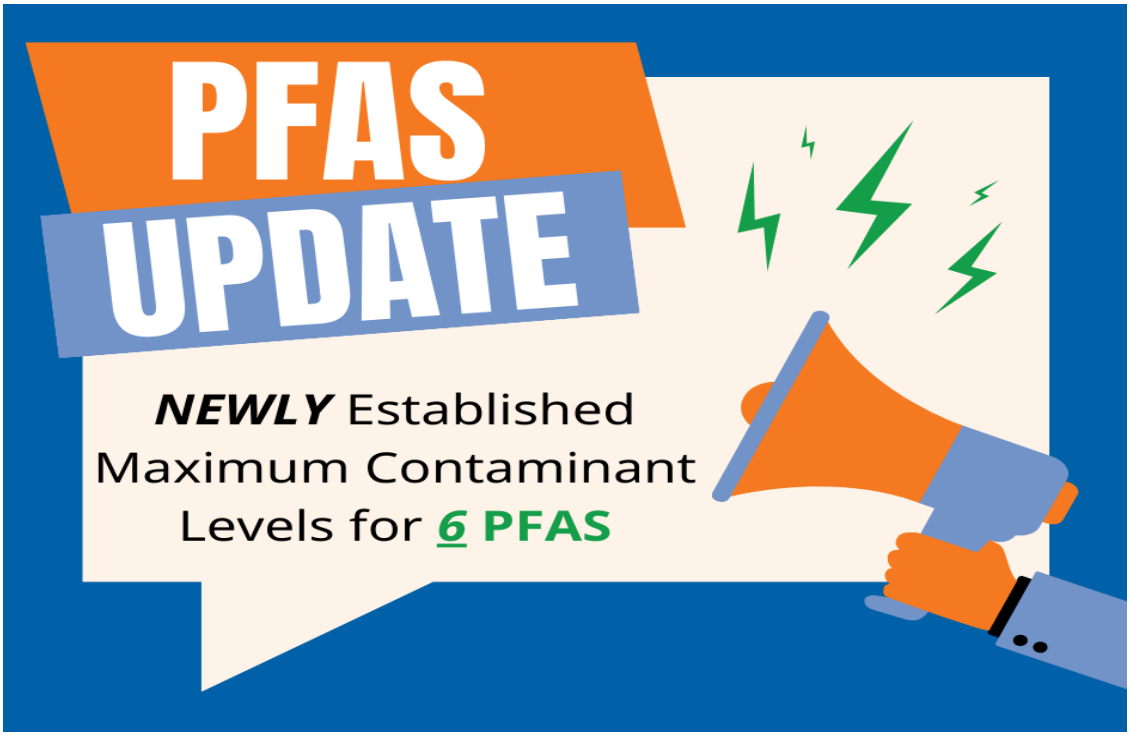
After a natural disaster, the amount of TDS can increase. However, it is important to know that TDS is not solely caused by natural disasters. TDS can also be caused by agricultural run-off, sewage, and natural resources (e.g. leaves, silt, plankton, and rocks). You should regularly test your well water for TDS to ensure that your levels do not exceed 500 ppm (or mg/L).



For more information, download our free **wellcare®** information sheet on **Total Dissolved Solids**.

If you have any questions about TDS, contact the **wellcare®** Hotline at 888-395-1033 or visit our **website**.

Hotline HOT Topic: PFAS Update



On April 10, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established legally enforceable Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for six PFAS in public drinking water systems. PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, and HFPO-DA (also known as GenX) as contaminants with individual MCLs, and PFAS mixtures containing at least two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS using a Hazard Index MCL to account for the combined and co-occurring levels of these PFAS in drinking water. Additionally, a health-based, non-enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) for these PFAS has been established. Some states may have recommended levels even lower than those provided by EPA. Check with your state environmental agency for more information. If your state has lower maximum levels for PFAS in drinking water, these levels supersede the EPA levels and should be used in its place. Well owners are encouraged to use these levels as a guideline when well water should be treated.

Our **wellcare® PFAS** information sheet has an easy to read table with MCLS and MCLGs for each contaminant and explains what you need to do to ensure your well water is safe.

Kidz Korner: Dancing Chocolate Chips

Need something fun for the kiddos on summer break? How about a dancing competition with chocolate chips?! Let's see your chocolate chips dance. Read the instructions below. Take a short video of your dancing chocolate chips and post it on our social media pages with **#kidzkorner** for a shout out.

What you'll need:

- Seltzer water or club soda. You can also use clear soda like Sprite or 7-Up.
  - ***Tip: new unopened carbonated liquids create the best results!***
- Chocolate chips (you can also try other small individual food items like raisins, small dry pasta pieces, dried lentils, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Fill a clear glass with the seltzer or clear soda.
2. Drop approximately 10 chocolate chips into the filled glass.
3. Watch what happens! It may take a few minutes before you see them "dance."

Did You Know?

The chocolate chips are more dense than the soda. This means that they will initially sink. But as time goes by, the carbon dioxide from the carbonation in the soda will create tiny bubbles that will attach themselves onto the chocolate chips. These little bubbles act as a life jacket for the chocolate chips and will make them float. Once the chocolate chips reach the surface, the bubbles will release carbon dioxide into the air and then the chocolate chips will sink again, starting the process all over!

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wellcare® HOTLINE
A Water Systems Council Program

Still Have Questions?

We can help! Call the **wellcare®** Hotline at **888-395-1033**, **complete an online form**, **send us an email**, or **chat with us live**!

Connect with us