



DEC *Public Service Advisory*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEC issues warning to property owners impacted by flooding

Flooded wells may need disinfecting; flooded onsite sewer systems may be damaged

Nov. 23, 2005—Juneau--Property owners of low lying lots and property adjacent to flooding streams or rivers in Southeast Alaska may need to disinfect their wells and check their sewer systems for damage, advises the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Wells that have been flooded may be contaminated by surface waters. If your property has been flooded and you have an onsite well, DEC advises that water used for drinking, cooking, hand washing, or dish washing should be boiled for at least 2 minutes. Once the flooding has subsided, homeowners should chlorinate their wells to disinfect the drinking water system. After disinfection, your water should be tested for Total Coliform Bacteria to ensure that it is safe to drink.

Flooded onsite sewer systems will not function properly and may be damaged. A flooded drainfield will not provide proper wastewater treatment and it may take some time for the surrounding ground to dry up enough for the drainfield to recover and resume its normal absorption capability.

If sewage has leaked out of the system onto the ground surface, DEC recommends that disinfecting the area with lime (a light powdering of finely ground garden lime will work) or a solution 5% chlorine bleach and water. Sewage on the ground can contain active and harmful bacteria, cysts and viruses. If at all possible, DO NOT use your onsite sewer system until after the flood waters and groundwater levels have receded enough to prevent wastewater from surfacing or backing up into your house.

For more information regarding water disinfection procedures, or where to have your water tested, call your local DEC office in Juneau at (907) 465-5333.

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