



# Media Release

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## **Yakima Health District Provides Guidance on Private Wells, Septic Systems, and Home Safety After Flooding**

**Yakima, WA-** Following recent flooding impacts across Yakima County, the Yakima Health District (YHD) is sharing key safety reminders and resources to help residents protect their health and homes.

Floodwater can carry bacteria, chemicals, and other contaminants that pose health risks. Even if floodwater has receded, drinking water systems, private wells, and septic systems may still be affected.

### **Drinking Water & Private Well Safety**

Residents in or near flood-prone areas should monitor their water closely, even if their property was not flooded or they do not have a private well.

- Do not drink the water if you notice any changes in color, taste, odor, or clarity.
- If your well was submerged in floodwater, do not use it for drinking, cooking, bathing, or brushing teeth.
- Use bottled water, or water that has been boiled for at least 10 minutes, until your well is inspected, disinfected, and tested.
- Once floodwaters recede, shut off power to the well pump before inspecting or working on the well to reduce the risk of electric shock.
- Once conditions improve, contact a licensed well professional for inspection and testing.

### **Septic Systems**

Flooding can damage septic systems and cause sewage to back up into homes.

- If you have a septic system and flooding is occurring or expected, block basement drains and avoid using toilets, sinks, dishwashers, and washing machines.
- Shut off power to any electrical components of the septic system to prevent electrical

hazards.

- Stay away from standing water that may contain sewage.
- Do not pump your septic tank until the ground has dried out, as pumping too early can damage the system.
- Once floodwaters recede and conditions improve, a licensed septic professional can assess and service your system.

### **Home Cleanup and Safety**

Once floodwaters recede, clean and dry your home as quickly as possible to prevent mold growth.

- Disinfect durable surfaces that came into contact with floodwater or sewage using 1 cup of household bleach mixed with 1 gallon of cool water.
- Discard soft items that cannot be safely cleaned.

### **Resources**

Individuals can contact the Yakima Health District Help Desk at 509-249-6508 to speak with an Environmental Health Specialist if they have any questions related to their wells and septic systems. For additional information, individuals can visit Yakima Health District's [Drinking Water Emergencies webpage](#).

### **Additional Information**

[Drinking Water Emergencies | Yakima Health District](#)

[Licensed Well Disinfection Services | Yakima Health District](#)

[Disinfecting Your Well | Yakima Health District](#)

[Floods | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Floods: Be Prepared, Be Safe | Washington State Department of Health](#)

[Preparing for Floods | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

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