

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2017

Joint agency media release from Gooding and Lincoln counties as well as the South Central Public Health District

South Central Public Health District wants the public to be aware of potential problems associated with widespread flooding due to the amount of snow receive to date as well as a potential water quality issue.

If there has been possible well water contamination from the recent flooding at your well and you are unsure of the quality of your water, do not use it for drinking or food processing until you have had your well water tested.

Please make sure that you follow the sampling instructions included in the box. Sampling of well water is very specific and instructions must be followed to ensure a sterile sample was taken.

You can collect well water testing information at Gooding and Lincoln county Sheriff's office as well as Lincoln County Community Center. From the information received as of February 25, 2017, no city water systems have been affected.

If you are concerned about the quality of your well water, it is suggested that you boil your water if it does not appear discolored or has an unusual odor. After you boil your water, we suggested that you test for nitrates using test strips. Nitrate test strips and instructions are available where the well water sampling kits are distributed.

Residents of Lincoln and Gooding County in the below identified area:

Because of possible well water contamination, South Central Public Health District is recommending that residents living in the areas of 320 North to 750 North and west of Hwy 75, to Lincoln / Gooding County line and in Gooding County, from 2400 East to 2200 East on 1300 South then North 3 miles back east to county line road. Do not do not use well water for drinking, bathing, or food processing until you have had your well water tested and it comes back negative for Coliform and E.coli.

For those in Gooding County identified area shower facilities will be available at the Gooding County Annex located at 145 7th Ave. East in Gooding. If you need to use the showers, please call Missy Shurtz at 208-731-9682.

For those in Lincoln County in the identified area you can pick up drinking water and use the shower facilities at the Lincoln County Community Center by contacting Payson Reese at 208-410-1738.

Below you will find some frequently asked questions and answers provided by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Further information can be obtained by calling the local Department of Environmental Quality and / or South Central Public Health District.

Included you will find frequently asked questions and answers prepared by South Central Public Health District.

SIRCOMM recommends that all citizens with Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln Counties sign up for the Citizens Alert Network (CAN) system so that in the event of an incident affecting a specific area or county you will be

notified. You can sign up by going to www.sircomm.com and scrolling down the page to the CAN system banner. Residents in the City of Twin Falls can also sign up for alerts within city limits as well.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): For Residents of Lincoln and Gooding Counties

Prepared by South Central Public Health District 02.27.2017

Residents of Lincoln and Gooding counties, living in the areas of 320 North to 750 North and west of Hwy 75, to Lincoln / Gooding County line and in Gooding County, from 2400 East to 2200 East on 1300 South then North 3 miles back east to county line road

Is my water safe drink or use?

1. If the well water looks smells or tastes different from normal, it should not be used for anything other than flushing toilets until the water returns to a normal look and smell, the well has been disinfected, and a laboratory test shows the water clear of bacteria.
 - a. If the sample is clear of coliform bacteria but still has an abnormal look, smell or taste, we recommend that you contact a private water quality specialist for advice (well driller, Culigan, Kinetico, etc.)
2. If the well water has not had any change to look, taste or smell, but you are concerned; you may test the water for coliform bacteria. Whether or not you use it while you are waiting for the results is up to you.
 - a. If the test results are negative, then you can use the water as normal, but we recommend that you be on the lookout for any changes in water quality.
 - b. If the test results are positive, we advise that you not consume the water until you get a test that is absent for coliform bacteria. You can use the water for other uses. You can contact SCPHD or a private water quality specialist for advice (well driller, Culigan, Kinetico, etc.) for suggestions.

What do I do if my test results are positive for total coliform?

Total coliform is a name for a general group of bacteria. Some of the members of this group, like E. coli, can make people sick. Most members of the coliform group cannot, but they are easy and inexpensive to test for. If you have total coliform only, it means that there might be a problem. If the water is still clear and normal, we recommend that they disinfect (bleach) the well per the instructions on our website. That may clear up the problem.

What do I do if my test results are positive for E.coli?

You should not use the water for drinking, brushing teeth, etc. If the water is clear and normal, then boiling for a minute will make the water safe for any use, as long as no other contaminants, such as nitrates, are present. Test strips will be available at the Gooding and Lincoln county courthouse. Please call ahead to ensure they have not run out.

If the nitrate levels are normal and the water is still clear and normal, we recommend that they disinfect (bleach) the well per the instructions on our website. (phd5.idaho.gov/flooding)

Will boiling my water make it safe for my family to drink?

If your water still looks, smells and tastes normal, and doesn't have high nitrates or other chemicals of concern, then yes, boiling the water for 1 minute will make it safe to drink. If your water has high levels of nitrates or other contaminants, boiling will just concentrate them. If the water looks, smells, or tastes different than it normally does, boiling the water will not help.

Can I bathe or shower if my water is clear?

Yes. Just avoid drinking any of the water.

If my well tested positive when should I retest my water?

If the well water looks smells or tastes different from normal, it should not be used for anything other than flushing toilets until returns to a normal look and smell, the well has been disinfected, and a laboratory test shows the water clear of bacteria.

If the look, smell and taste have not changed, then the well disinfection procedure should be followed.

How long will I need to test my water?

We do not know at this time how long it will take for any particular well to recover. It will depend upon the weather, how the particular well was constructed, how it has been maintained, and where it is.

*****Do not publish below contact information*****

For further media related inquiries contact John Moore at 208-316-6099