



# Starting Up Your Seasonal Water System

Many water systems only operate for part of the year. Examples include: campgrounds, summer camps, restaurants, sporting camps, ski areas, golf courses, and motels. These systems often open and serve drinking water to the public after hibernating for part of the year. If you operate a seasonal system use this guide to help avoid problems with your system.

- ✓ **Inspect your well:** If you do not have a sanitary sealed well cap or if the well cap is loose, take off the well cap and check to see if there is debris inside. Use a shop vacuum to remove any unwanted material. Bugs and other critters can introduce bacteria into the water system. If your well cap does not seal, replace it with a new one. Ask your public water system inspector about the Drinking Water Program's Sanitary Seal Well Cap program. Remember, the Ground Water Rule says that you must have a sample tap before your pressure tank, so you can collect source samples if your water tests positive for coliform.
- ✓ **Disinfect the system:** Water in your pipes and in your well sits over the winter and stagnates. If you've drained the system, there's a good chance that bacteria have moved in. You can kill bacteria by adding bleach to your well. You must use bleach that has been approved for disinfecting drinking water (e.g. Clorox®). Guidance for disinfection can be found in our 'Well Shocking Fact Sheet' which is located on our website at: [www.tinyurl.com/SeasonalSystems](http://www.tinyurl.com/SeasonalSystems). Many systems break apart sections of water lines in the fall to ensure they are drained. You can help speed up disinfection by adding bleach directly into the water pipes before re-connecting.
- ✓ **Run your well to fill the system:** Turn on faucets at the ends of the system to push chlorinated water into all of the pipes. When you can smell chlorine coming out of the taps, shut the water off and let it sit overnight. Chlorine works best if it is allowed to stay in contact with contaminated materials overnight.
- ✓ **Flush the chlorine out:** After you have let your water sit overnight, open the faucets and allow the chlorinated water out of the system. Use a hose to direct the chlorinated water to places where it won't damage vegetation or come in contact with surface water. Don't flush chlorinated water into your septic system because the chlorine can kill the 'good' bacteria in your septic system.
- ✓ **Flush your tanks:** Be sure to drain and refill your water storage tanks to remove rusty water and ensure that the valves still work. Continue flushing until the water is no longer discolored.
- ✓ **Walk your pipes:** If you have lines that run over the ground, take a walk around to make sure that they are not leaking. Leaking lines may result in bacteria entering the system and can increase your power costs. It can also run your well dry.
- ✓ **Wait a week before taking bacterial samples:** We strongly encourage collecting an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) total coliform bacteria sample to ensure your efforts to prepare for the season have been successful. O&M samples do not count toward annual testing requirements. If the samples are "bad" they will not count against you. However, if the results are good you cannot use the results for compliance purposes.
- ✓ **Collect your initial compliance samples within 30 days** of opening as required by the State Drinking Water Regulations. Refer to the Annual Testing Requirements Letter that was mailed to your system for the required water tests and frequencies that will be due during the operating season.
- ✓ **Remember:** Seasonal water systems must perform a State-approved startup procedure and provide certification to the DWP that they have met that requirement. Certification must be completed and sent to the DWP *before* serving water to the public.

*If you have any questions regarding the compliance requirements for your system, call your public water system inspector at 287-2070.*

**Keep Your Drinking Water Safe:**

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✓ Protect Your Source

✓ Take Your Samples

✓ Maintain Your Treatment

✓ Inspect Your Pipes & Tanks