

# Additional free testing available for private water well owners affected by Hurricane Harvey

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COLLEGE STATION — The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and others are collaborating to offer another set of free water testing opportunities Feb. 14-15 for private well owners in areas affected by floodwaters from Hurricane Harvey.

Dr. Diane Boellstorff, AgriLife Extension water resource specialist, College Station, said water from a flooded well should not be used for drinking, cooking, making ice, brushing teeth or even bathing until tested.

Boellstorff said floodwater might contain substances from upstream, such as manure, sewage from flooded septic systems or wastewater treatment plants or other contaminants. A septic system near a well also can cause contamination when the soil is flooded.

AgriLife Extension's Texas Well Owner Network is collaborating with Rebuild Texas, Virginia Tech and others to provide free water testing for total coliform and E. coli bacteria in private water wells affected by flooding from Hurricane Harvey.

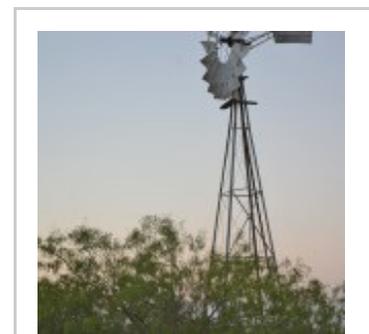
"Residents can pick up a free water sampling test kit from their local AgriLife Extension office or other designated location, but must be able to return the sample to their local office from 8-11 a.m. on the designated collection date," Boellstorff said.

Instructions are included with the kits and only one sample kit will be provided per household. There are a limited number of kits available at AgriLife Extension offices.

Samples will be processed at Texas A&M University in College Station. AgriLife Extension office addresses for pickup and sample collection dates are:

— Aransas County, 892 Airport Road in Rockport, collection date Feb. 14.

— Jackson County, 411 N. Wells, Suite 111 in Edna, collection date Feb. 14.



A free water well screening is being offered in counties affected by Hurricane Harvey. (Texas A&M AgriLife Communications photo by Steve Byrns)

— Jefferson County, 1225 Pear St., Suite 200 in Beaumont, collection date Feb. 15.

Any homeowner with a private domestic water well in the flood-affected area is eligible to have well water tested. Results will be confidential and will be either emailed or mailed to residents' homes.

“Data from the well water testing will help us better understand a flood’s impact on private wells and help us enhance our communications relating to well water quality,” she said.

Instructions for decontaminating a well are available through the following publications free for download at <http://twon.tamu.edu/fact-sheets/> — How to Disinfect a Private Well System and Shock Chlorination of Wells.

Drew Gholson, AgriLife Extension program specialist and network coordinator, College Station, said wells should also be inspected for physical damage and signs of leakage after a flood.

“If it appears damaged, consult a licensed water well contractor to determine whether — and to what extent — repairs are needed,” Gholson said.

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