

Rapid Assessment Form for Wells Affected by Wildfire

Use CDC's form to rapidly assess risks to drinking water from household wells and water system infrastructure after a wildfire.

Property owner: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

County: _____

GPS location of residence/business: Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Associated fire name (if known): _____

OUTDOORS

1. Observe fire damage to the building or property.

a. Does the building have power?

Yes No

b. If no power, is a generator being used?

Yes No N/A

Undersized generators can damage the pumping system. A licensed well contractor, electrician, or power company should determine the proper generator to avoid damage to the pump and well system.

If yes, is the generator located outside and at least 20 feet away from doors, windows, and vents?

Yes No

Never use a generator inside, even if doors and windows are open.

Use generators and any gas-powered equipment outside, at least 20 feet away from doors, windows, and vents.

c. Is the exterior of the building burned or showing signs of heat damage? Yes No

A licensed well company may need to inspect the system if the outside of the building or yard area near the well is burned.

d. Are chemicals and combustibles stored at an acceptable offset distance of the well? Yes No

This distance can vary by jurisdiction.

If yes, what type: _____

e. Are large fuel or chemical tanks at an acceptable offset distance from the well? Yes No

If no, what type: _____

f. Is there an operational municipal sewer connection for the building? Yes No Unknown

If no or unknown, is a functional onsite wastewater system able to treat wastewater discharges from the building?



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

2. Observe fire damage associated with the well.

Damage to electrical wires, controls, pipes, pressure tanks, and other components of these systems may affect system performance and may compromise the safety of the water supply. It could also affect the proper disposal of wastewater.

a. Is the well cap missing or damaged?

Yes No

A missing or damaged well cap can allow ash, animals, insects, and other debris to enter uncovered wells and contaminate the well.

Temporarily cover to prevent contaminants from entering.

b. Is surface water able to enter the exposed well?

Yes No

Rainwater runoff after a fire can allow ash, debris, or other contaminants to enter the well.

c. Are rubber gaskets missing or damaged in the sanitary seal on or near the top of the well casing or pitless unit?

Yes No

d. Are any electrical wiring, connectors, and conduits (including controls) that supply power to the well damaged or nonoperational?

Yes No

Do not handle the wiring or touch the casing if there is damage or exposed electrical wiring. Even if the pump is functioning, burned wires not visible from the surface could cause damage to the system.

e. Are the well casing or polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or high density polyethylene (HDPE) liners inside the well damaged?

Yes No

Damaged and melted plastic casing, liner, or pipe may contaminate the well with volatile or semi-volatile organic compounds and other contaminants.

f. Is there damage to aboveground or encased plumbing that brings water from the well to the building?

Yes No

g. Are pressure tanks damaged or nonoperational?

Yes No N/A

Water pressure bladder tanks exposed to high temperatures could contaminate the well.

h. Is there damage to the well house or other structures used to protect well components?

Yes No N/A

Damaged or burned well houses can indicate heat damage to well components and the potential for well contamination.

i. Are chlorinators or other water treatment equipment in the well house or other structure damaged or nonoperational?

Yes No N/A

j. Is there damage to water storage tanks, vents, or overflow pipes?

Yes No N/A

INDOORS

3. Observe the interior of the building for fire damage, plumbing leaks, and changes in operation.

a. Is water flow interrupted with air escaping when faucets are turned on? Yes No

Interrupted flow of water suggests loss of pressure.

b. Does the water taste or smell different (for example, an earthy or smoky smell or an odor of petroleum or gas)? Yes No

c. Are chlorinators or other water treatment equipment inside the building damaged or nonoperational? Yes No N/A

d. Are there visible leaks associated with the building plumbing system? Yes No