



# Emergency Drinking Water Supply

Natural disasters such as tropical storms and ice storms can cause long term power outages. During these events, residents with private wells often find themselves without water when there is no electricity to run their well pump. To protect public health during prolonged outages, communities may wish to establish an emergency water supply that all residents can access.

Community centers such as town offices, libraries, and fire stations can serve as an emergency water source for residents during a prolonged power outage if their well is equipped with a hand pump.

In emergency situations, residents in need of water can access community hand pump wells and fill containers with clean, safe water.



If you plan on installing a hand pump on your private well for emergencies, please consider the following:

- If the well is used for public consumption for 60 days or more in a given year, it will be subject to regulation as a public water system. To avoid regulation, the hand pump must only be made available in emergency situations.
- Install a locking device to prohibit use during non-emergency periods.
- Remove potential sources of contamination from around the well.
- It is advisable to conduct routine (at least annual) water quality sampling for bacteria analysis to ensure that the water is safe to drink.
- Monitor the use of the well during emergencies to ensure that the pump and area around the well are kept clean and the pump is being used properly. Prohibit hose connections or other activities that may result in contamination of the well.

If you plan on allowing access to a well hand pump outside of emergencies, you may become a regulated public water system. A public water system serves water to 25 people a day for at least 60 days of the year. If you think you may become a regulated public water system, you must submit an application for a new system to the Drinking Water Program. Visit [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com) for more information, or call 287-2070.

The Drinking Water Program has resources and staff available to assist towns or local emergency management agencies in developing emergency water sources.

Contact our Private Well Coordinator, Haig Brochu ([haig.brochu@maine.gov](mailto:haig.brochu@maine.gov), 592-3190) for any questions regarding your private well.

