



FALL 2023

**wellcare® Hotline: 888-395-1033**

Dear Well Owners Network Member:

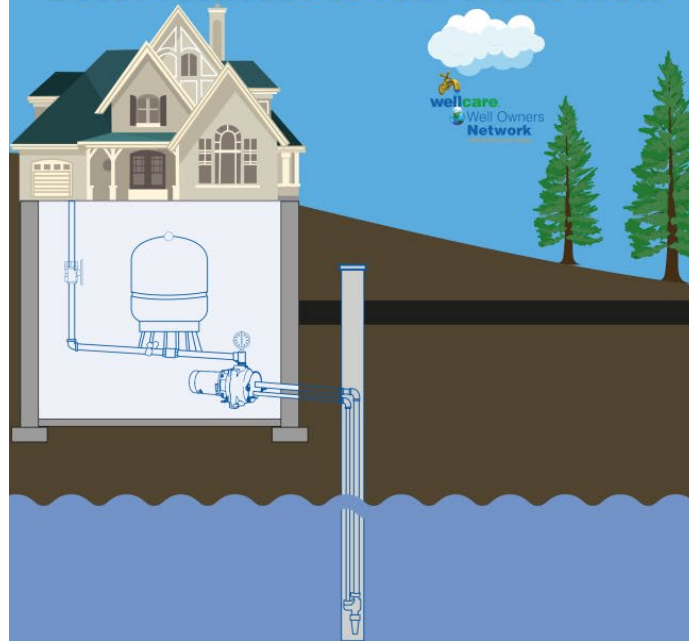
It's time for the fall newsletter...already! Time sure does fly, just like the falling autumn leaves! Within this newsletter, you will find a new infographic on the Best Practices for Your Water Well. We've also included our updated Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) information sheet, information on being "Septic Smart", and winterizing your well. We've included some tips for protecting your well before freezing temperatures arrive. Keep in mind that the South can freeze too, so all our members will benefit from this important information!

If you have questions regarding these topics, if you cannot find what you're looking for, or if you have any other questions on wells and well water, the [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) Hotline can help! Contact the [wellcare®](https://www.wellcare.org) Hotline at 888-395-1033 or [wellcarehotline.org](https://www.wellcarehotline.org). Don't forget to like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) for extra tips, industry news, and more!

## Best Practices for Your Water Well

Help keep your water well in tip-top shape and protect groundwater resources, check out our new infographic for best practices. Do you have an above-ground pump? You can [see our infographic here](#). For more information on best practices, visit our website at [wellcarehotline.org](https://www.wellcarehotline.org).

## Best Practices For Your Water Well



### Maintenance

- Visually inspect your wellhead and other well components that are above ground several times a year
- Have your well inspected by a licensed well contractor every 5 years or immediately if you have no record
- Test your well water at least annually. If there are any noticeable changes test right away
- If you have water treatment, have those systems maintained per your water treatment professional or manufacturer's recommendations

### Protecting Your Well

- Store any chemicals, fuel, paints, etc. away from your well
- Make sure the ground around your well slopes down away from your wellhead to avoid puddling
- Allow only grass to grow around your well. Other plants can have longer roots that may damage well casing
- Do not pile leaves, snow, or anything around your well. Consider adding a fiberglass marker to help with locating the well
- Keep heavy equipment and vehicles off your lawn to avoid accidental damage to your well
- Inspect and pump septic tanks every 3-5 years or as recommended by your septic service to avoid leaks and potential contamination to your well

### Additional Tips

- Have any abandoned wells properly sealed per your state or localities requirements
- Always contact your licensed well contractor for repairs
- Keep records of maintenance, test results, and repairs

## Protecting Your Well System From the Cold

### Seasonal Homes: Winterizing Your Well

Most vacation homes and cabins are considered seasonal homes. Some seasonal homes have private water wells that service the home. These types of homes are not designed to be used during the winter due to plumbing systems and structures that are not adequately insulated to withstand extreme cold. When preparing to close your vacation home for the season, leaving the home vacant and unheated, it is imperative to winterize the plumbing to protect it from bursting in freezing temperatures. This process includes going through the steps to winterize your water well.

WSC recommends that you contact a licensed plumber to winterize your home. If you must winterize on your own, [follow these steps and instructions](#).

### Year-round Homes: Your Well System

If you are in an area that tends to reach or has ever had freezing temperatures, you should make every effort to prevent your pipes, well, and well components from freezing. When pipes freeze, the flow of water is completely blocked. Since water expands as it turns into ice, the pipes are very likely to burst. It could also ruin your well pump and other exposed well components. This can be an expensive problem to fix and a disastrous occurrence in the frigid winter months. If your well or pipes freeze, contact your licensed well contractor or plumber as soon as possible.

Help keep your well from freezing with a pitless adapter. A pitless adapter attaches to your well casing to provide a sanitary and frost-proof seal between the casing and the water line running to your home. This device protects the water from freezing and permits convenient access to the well and well components without having to dig around the well. The adapter is connected to the well casing below the frost line, which is the depth at which the ground does not freeze. Water from the well is diverted horizontally at the adapter to prevent it from freezing. Contact your licensed well contractor to discuss installing a pitless adapter. You should also protect your wellhead from getting damaged by snow and heavy equipment like snow blowers and plows. There are existing older wells that are in driveways, close to the driveway, or close to a road. Consider adding a fiberglass driveway marker to help with locating the well. If your well gets covered by snow, you will easily find it and can carefully remove the snow around it.

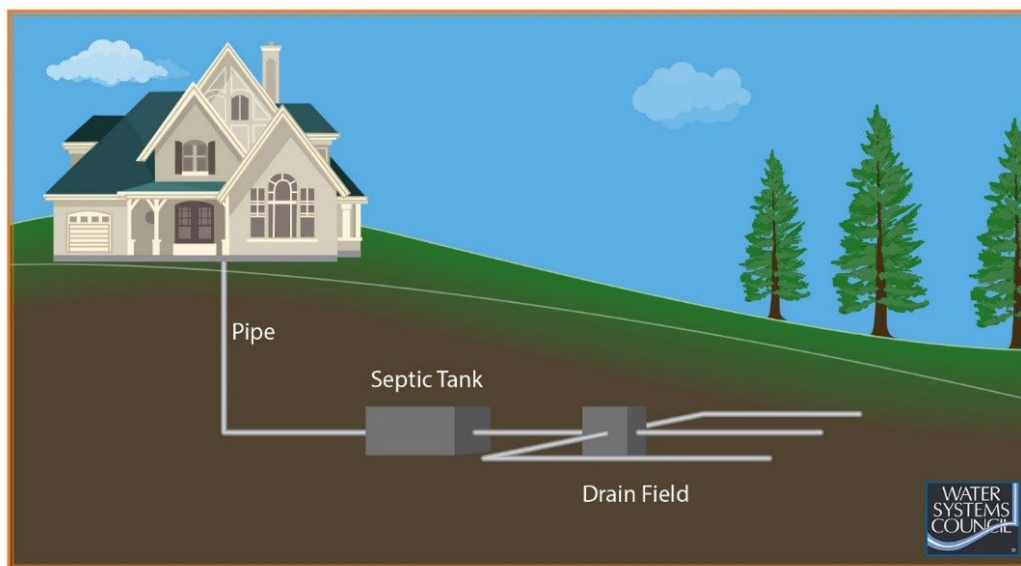
### ***Freezing temps on the way and no time to make adjustments?***

If your wellhead is exposed to outside elements and freezing temperatures are on the way, wrap it with insulation, blankets, towels, or anything else you can find that will not cause damage to the wellhead but can help protect it from the cold.

To learn more about protecting your pipes, pump, tank, and our tips if your pipes or well system are already frozen, download our [wellcare®](#) information sheet on [Protecting Your Pipes and Well System From Freezing](#) from our website.

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## **Be Septic Smart**



### **SepticSmart Week is September 18-22, 2023**

SepticSmart Week reminds us of the importance of caring for and maintaining our septic systems. Just like water well systems, septic systems require regularly scheduled maintenance to ensure proper functioning.

### **Septic System Maintenance**

You should create a septic maintenance log and keep it with your well maintenance log. Or [download a free copy from NOWRA's website](#).

Proper maintenance of a septic system includes:

- Regular inspection every 1 to 2 years
- Having the system pumped every 3 to 5 years, depending on demand
- Conserving water to reduce the amount of demand placed on the system and prolong its useful life

Demand is based on the number of people in your household, the amount of wastewater generated, the volume of solids, and the size of your tank. Contact your septic service professional for assistance and maintenance.

### **Protecting Your Septic System**

Everyone in the household must consider what is flushed into the septic system as this can reduce or damage the natural function of the septic system. Avoid flushing items that can clog the system or chemicals that can contaminate ground and surface water, and potentially damage the biological components of the system.

**DO NOT** flush grease, fats, oils, bandages, feminine hygiene products, disposable diapers, disposable wipes –even wipes that say ‘flushable’, paper towels, kitty litter, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, dental floss, hair, medicines, paint, pesticides, varnish, thinners, waste oil, or other chemicals. Ideally, **ONLY** water and household detergents are flushed into the system.

The septic system’s drain field must also be protected. The following strategies are recommended to protect the field and prolong its functional life:

- Do not drive over the drain field with cars, trucks, or heavy equipment.
- Do not plant trees or shrubbery in the drain field area as roots can plug or damage the wastewater distribution lines.
- Do not cover the drain field with hard surfaces such as concrete or asphalt. Grass is the best cover because it will help prevent erosion and help remove excess water.
- Divert surface runoff water from roofs, patios, driveways, and other areas away from the drain field.

*A properly maintained septic system poses no threat to the groundwater that supplies a household well. However, wastewater from a failing septic system can*

*carry contaminants such as nitrates, harmful bacteria, and viruses into groundwater and potentially the well.*

Find more information and tips [here](#).

## **Hotline HOT Topic:** What are VOCs and should I test my well water for them?

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are a class of chemical compounds that share two main properties:

1. They evaporate easily from water into the air; and
2. They contain carbon.

Low concentrations of most VOCs in water can produce a sweet and pleasant or foul and unpleasant odor that is easily detected. VOCs are associated with products such as but not limited to gasoline, plastics, adhesives, dry-cleaning fluids, refrigerants, and paints. Biological sources of VOCs are from the degradation of organic matter in feed and manure. Crude oil tanking can also release VOCs into the atmosphere.

When spilled or improperly disposed of, VOCs may be released into the environment. Any portion that does not evaporate may leach into the soil and can be carried into groundwater by rain, water, and snow melt. Factors that influence the likelihood of contamination include:

- proximity of the well to the source of contamination;
- the amount of VOCs that are spilled or discarded;
- depth of the well (shallow wells are affected by surface spills more quickly and more severely than deep wells);
- local geology (groundwater that is protected by thick, dense, impermeable soils is less vulnerable to contamination); and
- time (groundwater moves slowly, so it can take months or years after a spill before contamination reaches wells).

You should test your well water for VOCs if it is in close proximity to a gasoline service station or other fuel tanks (500 to 1000 feet), if a spill has occurred on or near your property, or if your water has the taste or odor of gasoline or solvents. Contact your state or local health department for a list of state-certified laboratories

in your area or use our [interactive map](#) on our website. If you need assistance locating a laboratory in your area, contact our [wellcare®](#) Hotline.

[Read our information sheet on VOCs & Well Water](#) for more information.

An advertisement for Wellcare Hotline. The background is a photograph of two dogs, a white fluffy dog on the left and a German Shepherd on the right, both with their heads and shoulders visible above a large pile of vibrant autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top left, it says "Water Well Questions?" in a white, italicized font. Below that, "We've got you covered!" is written in a larger, bold white font. In the center, there is a logo for "wellcare HOTLINE" with a small green water tap icon above the word "wellcare" and "HOTLINE" in blue. Below the logo, it says "A Water Systems Council Program" in a very small font. At the bottom of the image, the website "wellcarehotline.org" is written in a blue font, underlined. Below the website, the words "CALL CHAT EMAIL" are written in a bold, orange font.

*Water Well Questions?*  
**We've got  
you covered!**

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