

Disinfection of a Cistern or Hauled Water Storage Tank

Since contamination could occur during the construction and/or repair of a water or plumbing system, both should be disinfected before being used and the easiest way to do this is by chlorination.

Step 1: Cleaning the Cistern or Hauled Water Tank

While the cistern or hauled water tank is empty, use a stiff broom or brush and scrub the interior walls and ceiling with a disinfecting solution mixed from 1 quart bleach in 3 gallons of water. Use a wet-vacuum to remove the water and debris. CAUTION: Chlorine fumes may be heavy so make sure there is adequate ventilation.

Step 2: Disinfecting

Fill the tank with potable water and add 1-2 gallons of household bleach for every 1000 gallons of water. Mix as thoroughly as possible. Do not use scented bleach.

Step 3: Circulate the Chlorine Throughout the Plumbing System

Open every tap, hot and cold, inside and outside of the house one by one until a bleach odor is detected then turn the tap off. This will bring the chlorine solution into the plumbing. Make sure **all** faucets are turned on including rarely used taps such as an outside spigot or yard hydrant. Don't forget to run water into the washing machine and toilets. **Bypass all water treatment units to avoid damaging the resin bed.** These units do need to be disinfected so follow manufactures' guidelines.

Step 4: Contact Time

Once the odor of chlorine is detected in all the water lines, let the water rest in the plumbing for at least 24 hours. It is alright to flush the toilets during this time.

Step 5: Flush the Chlorine from the System

After 24 hours, flush the system with potable water. Run the chlorinated water to waste preferably through an outside spigot to avoid flooding the septic system. This may take a while depending on the volume of water. Every tap will also need to be run to finish clearing all the chlorine out of the lines.

Step 6: Testing

Contact the Warren County Combined Health District at 513-695-1220 to schedule collection of a water sample. The chlorine must be flushed out of the system at least 48 hours before it can be sampled. Also, all softeners and filters should be bypassed until a safe sample is obtained.

If you are purchasing hauled water, make sure the water hauler has a current Ohio water hauling sticker. This helps to insure that the water hauler has the proper equipment and uses approved methods in handling drinking water.