

Fact sheet

MAKE SURE ALL IS WELL WITH YOUR BORE



Bacterial contamination of bores and wells can cause serious groundwater quality problems.

Contamination can occur when water from above ground flows directly into or down the side of your bore or well.

This can carry with it a variety of contaminants including bacteria and other microbial pathogens.

If you have a bore on your property, please ensure contaminated water cannot get back down into the bore either through flooding or backflow.

Contamination can include stagnant water near the well, localised seepage into the well, animal faecal contamination, septic tank seepage, runoff/seepage following rainfall into the well.

Even if the water from your bore looks clean and smells fine, contamination cannot normally be noticed by just looking at it or smelling it.

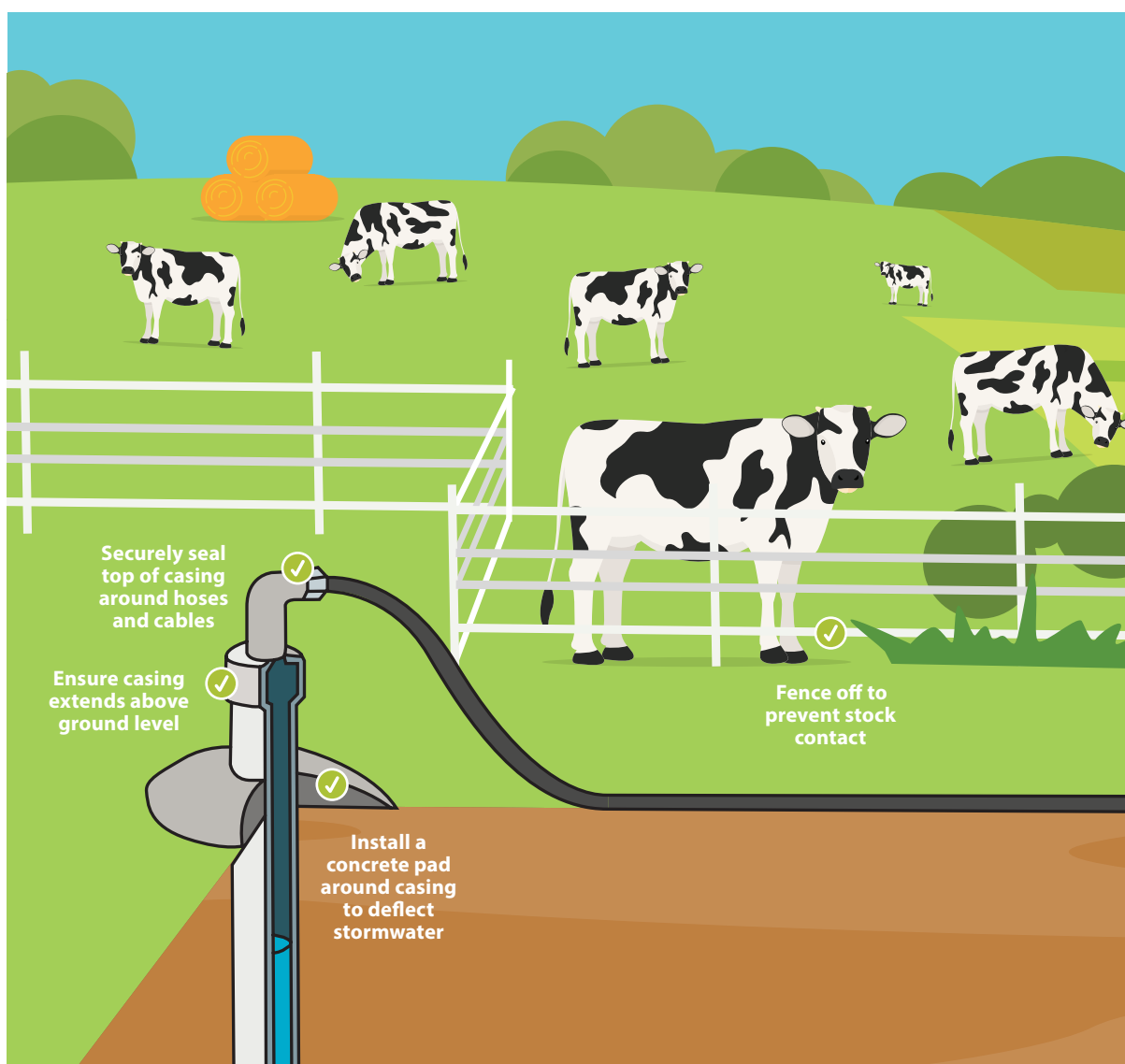
Taking the time to check the condition of your well could help prevent you, your family, or your stock from getting sick and will help protect the quality of our groundwater.

MAINTENANCE

In many cases, problems with the reliability of bores and wells can be avoided by regular maintenance. Regular maintenance may also reduce pumping and equipment replacement costs. Here are some basic ways to maintain your water supply:

- Regularly flush out pressure tanks to remove sediment and ensure sufficient air is retained. Sufficient air helps maintain pump efficiency.
- Casing corrosion, sediment build-up and screen blocking can reduce the yield of your bore. Regular flushing may help stop it "running dry" and extend the life of your bore. Have your bore regularly flushed out by an experienced contractor.
- Naturally occurring bacteria commonly associated with iron in groundwater occur in many bores and wells. These bacteria can generate films and slime that can clog pumps, screens, and plumbing.
- If you are having a new bore drilled, make sure it is located as far as practical from potential sources of contamination such as septic tanks, offal holes, and effluent disposal areas.
- If renewing a pressure tank, explore the option of a fibreglass replacement. These do not corrode and will last longer than a steel tank.
- There are a number of treatment options, ranging from boiling through to filtering, chemical or UV treatments, available to people.
- Add a backflow prevention device, especially if your water system is connected to stock water troughs or used to fill sprayers or tankers. This will prevent contaminated water flowing back into your water supply.
- Remember to prevent pumps, hoses and fittings from frost damage.
- Avoid spraying herbicide around your bore or well to control weed growth.
- Unused or abandoned wells and bores should be securely sealed and preferably filled according to correct procedure (contact a drilling contractor).





USE THIS CHECKLIST TO SEE HOW SAFE YOUR WATER SUPPLY IS

- ✓ Check the casing extends far enough above ground to prevent stormwater runoff entering the bore or well.
- ✓ Place a sloping concrete pad around the casing to deflect stormwater and prevent weed growth.
- ✓ Check the top of the bore or well is securely sealed to prevent entry of any foreign material. (Tip: silage tape is excellent for sealing around pipes and cables to make your wellhead secure).
- ✓ Remove chemicals, fertilisers and other potential contaminants from around bores or wells and keep the area free of rubbish.
- ✓ Fence off the bore or well to prevent stock access.
- ✓ Check all pipes and fittings for leaks.
- ✓ Check pumps are not leaking oil or grease.
- ✓ Ensure drainage is sufficient so that water does not pond around the wellhead.
- ✓ Use a removable cap to allow sampling to take place.
- ✓ Test a sample of your groundwater once a year for faecal bacteria. Testing can be done through either Hill Laboratories (hill-labs.co.nz) or Cawthron Institute (samples@cawthron.org.nz).
- ✓ Ensure water filters are regularly maintained.

If you need any advice about water quality from private water supplies, please do not hesitate to contact us at regulatory.admin@tasman.govt.nz, or call 03 543 8400 and ask to speak to an Environmental Health Officer.