



RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN HEALTH DISTRICT Environmental Health Updates

Don't Touch Wildlife!



Wild animals may look cute or in need of help, but touching them can be dangerous for you and them.

Spring is Around the Corner – Enjoy the Season Safely (Rabies Safety)!

Almost Spring, and with it comes warmer weather, blooming flowers, and plenty of adorable baby animals. It's a wonderful time to get outside and enjoy nature, but remember, safety comes first!

Wildlife Awareness While it's tempting to approach cute animals, especially babies, please keep your distance. Wild animals can carry diseases that are dangerous to humans and pets, even if they look perfectly healthy.

Rabies Risk Rabies is a fatal disease that affects the brain and nervous system. Once symptoms appear, it is almost always deadly. Animals infected with rabies may not show obvious signs of illness, so never assume an animal is safe to touch.

Even if you're trying to help an animal, contact with wildlife can have serious consequences:

- The animal may need to be euthanized to test for rabies.
- You may need to undergo a rabies vaccination series, which is costly and involves multiple medical visits.

Protect yourself and wildlife:

- Do not touch or feed wild animals.
- Keep your distance, even from cute babies.
- Report sick or injured wildlife to local animal control or wildlife rehabilitators.

Enjoy spring responsibly! Admire wildlife from afar and keep yourself, your family, and our animal neighbors safe.



Water Well Completion Requirements

After constructing a new well in Virginia, state regulations require the submission of a Uniform [Water Well Completion Report \(GW-2\)](#) within 30 days of completion. This form documents essential details about the well and ensures compliance with groundwater management standards.

Once construction is complete, the well must be disinfected according to the [VA Private Well Regulations](#) and tested for water quality. Testing includes bacteriological analysis sampling for contaminants. All analyses must be performed by certified laboratories.

Additionally, a pump test is required to determine yield and drawdown, typically lasting 48 hours (with exceptions for low-yield wells).

Wells must also meet sanitary construction standards, including watertight caps, and proper venting, and comply with setback requirements, at least 5 feet from property lines, with the exception if the adjacent lot is used for agricultural purposes and they don't have an exemption from the other landowner, then it's 50-feet. These measures ensure safe drinking water and protect Virginia's groundwater resources.

Be sure to send your GW-2 and well water sample result to your local health department after the construction of a new well so you can obtain your operation permit!



Final inspections for onsite sewage systems

Please continue to call or email our offices to inform us of the dates and locations of the final inspections. RRHD conducts 100% of inspections for all onsite sewage systems designed by private-sector Onsite Soil Evaluators (OSEs) and/or Professional Engineers (PEs). ***Specifically, RRHD staff request the opportunity to conduct the final inspection before any system components are backfilled.***

When possible, we prefer to conduct joint inspections with private sector designers. Our goal is not to complicate the process, but to improve coordination and efficiency from permitting through installation. As we all know, property owners are eager to receive their **Operation Permit** so they may obtain a **Certificate of Occupancy** from the local building department. We consider all of you our colleagues and appreciate the opportunity to work with you. We hope to continue strengthening these working relationships and improving the overall process.

Please follow the guidance below regarding sewage system inspections:

Inspections

- Inspection requests must be made by a licensed Onsite Sewage System Installer (Conventional or Alternative) or Onsite Soil Evaluator **by calling or emailing** the appropriate area office for the locality where the inspection is requested. Requests must be received no later than **12:00 p.m. on the business day prior** to the requested inspection date.
- All permitted sewage systems require a **minimum of one (1) inspection** by the local health department prior to issuance of an Operation Permit.
- Inspection requests must be made by a licensed Onsite Sewage System Installer (Conventional or Alternative) or Onsite Soil Evaluator by calling the appropriate area office for the locality where the inspection is requested. Requests must be received no later than **12:00 p.m. on the business day prior** to the requested inspection date.
- Inspections are scheduled Monday through Friday during regular office hours (see attached RRHD Communication Guidance).
- While RRHD strives to conduct joint inspections with private sector designers, scheduling conflicts may occasionally prevent this. If so, the Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) will notify you.

*Please contact the local health department **and** the Onsite Soil Evaluator and/or Professional Engineer (PE) if you have onsite concerns **prior to breaking ground**. For example, contour issues, landscape positions, or other factors that may affect system installation.*

Our goal is to issue the **Operation Permit within five (5) business days** of receipt of all required completion documentation, provided that an inspection has already been conducted. Please note that failure to schedule an inspection during construction will likely delay issuance of the Operation Permit.

Thank you for your cooperation. Inspections must cover all readily accessible and openable components such as:

- Septic tanks
- Pump tanks
- Distribution devices
- Treatment units
- Control panels
- Dispersal fields



What to Do After a Boil Water Notice Is Lifted

When local authorities lift a boil water notice, it means tests confirm tap water is safe, but cleanup is still essential. Follow these steps to fully restore your home's water supply:

1. Flush Your Household Plumbing System

- Run all cold water taps for at least five minutes (longer if you have a larger home). Start with the tap farthest from where the water enters your house and work toward the closest.
- Flush outdoor hoses, garden faucets, and showers to ensure fresh treated water flows through every line.

2. Clean Ice Makers & Refrigerator Water Dispensers

- Discard any ice made during or shortly after the advisory.
- Run at least one full cycle to rinse the reservoir before using again.

3. Refresh Other Appliances

- Dishwashers and washing machines can be used normally—no bleach or special cleaning needed.
- Coffee makers, kettles, and small appliances: run water through once or twice to rinse internal components.

4. Sanitize Filters & Water Softeners

- Most refrigerator filters don't need replacing, flushing water lines is usually enough.
- Water softeners, if present, should complete a regeneration cycle.

5. Check on Hot Water Systems

- Flushing cold water lines typically clears hot water issues, but if you suspect water heater problems, run hot taps until the water is fresh.

6. Wash Reusable Water Containers & Bowls

- Clean containers, bottles, and pet bowls thoroughly before refilling

7. Monitor Water Quality

- If water appears cloudy or discolored, contact your local water utility. It may be safe, but it's best to get confirmation.
- Continue to follow any additional guidance provided by the Virginia Department of Health.

Why These Steps Matter

Boil water notices are lifted only after water meets regulatory safety standards, but stagnant or residual water may remain in your plumbing and appliances. Flushing ensures that any leftover potentially contaminated water is fully replaced with fresh supply.

Taking these steps helps guarantee your water remains both safe and high-quality after an advisory. If you have questions or see unusual water characteristics, reach out to your Local Health Department or your local water provider for guidance.

[Boil Water Advisory Guidance - Drinking Water](#)