Flooded Private Well Recommendations

- If flood water goes over well, water is NOT safe to drink (or brush teeth, shower or wash with)
- Flood waters usually contain fecal material and other contaminants from overflowing septic systems, agric run-off, industry by-products
- Common illnesses with exposure to flood water:
  - Skin tissue infections following cuts, scratches, abrasions, or insect bites
  - Deep tissue infections following puncture wounds or trauma
  - Diarrhea following ingestion of contaminated water
When to test a flooded well?

1. Anytime water has gone over well head

2. Water not over well but has sudden change in look (cloudy, silty), taste, or smell

- After waters recede with help of certified well driller or contractor:
  - Inspect for well defects from flood damage
  - Pump well until water clear
  - Shock chlorinate the well and distribution system
  - When no longer smell chlorine, test drinking water for Total Coliforms and *E. coli* (nitrates optional)

**Summary:** Collect sample AFTER waters have receded and well system has been chlorinated. If not, water will always test POSITIVE for Total Coliform and E. coli.
Flood Related Resources

- IDNR “What should I do when my well floods”
- Water System Council wellcare® “Managing a Flooded Well”
- IDPH Fact Sheets
  - Cleaning flooded basement
  - Questions about mold
  - Private well used after a flood
  - Private flooded sewage systems
- CDC “Floodwater Safety, Reentering your Home”
- State Hygienic Laboratory 800-421-IOWA
  - Collection kits (if you need more Grants to Counties containers)
  - Flood Health and Safety Fact Sheets