

Well Water Checkups are a Must

What if you never changed your car oil or looked under the hood? How long would your car last?

When it comes to water wells, many well owners pay little attention to maintenance and water quality. Yet, it's just as important. Few things are more vital than the water you and your family drink. A water well checkup by a qualified contractor will help ensure a reliable supply of fresh drinking water. Since the water you drink is important, we encourage all well owners to mark a date on the calendar each year to call and schedule a well checkup.



The National Ground Water Association (NGWA) recommends a well maintenance check and water test at least every 12 months.

According to NGWA, a well checkup should include:

- ▶ A flow test to determine well output.
- ▶ A water-level check before and during pumping, if possible.
- ▶ A pump motor performance check including amp load, grounding and voltage.
- ▶ A pressure tank and pressure switch contact check.
- ▶ A well equipment inspection to assure it is sanitary and meets local codes.

- ▶ A water test for coliform bacteria, nitrates and anything else of local concern. (Additional tests may be recommended if water appears cloudy or oily, if bacterial growth is visible on fixtures, or if water treatment devices are not working properly.)
- ▶ A clearly written report that explains results and recommendations, and includes all laboratory and other test results.

You can arrange a checkup by contacting us to perform the type of inspection recommended by NGWA. For additional information, visit: <http://www.wellowner.org/>

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Exterior Surfaces

Here's a quick guide to performing a do-it-yourself inspection of a home's exterior surfaces:

Masonry Walls. Check masonry walls for cracks or loose, crumbling mortar joints. Since masonry is a brittle material, it is susceptible to damage from freezing. Water which penetrates cracks or joints and then expands when frozen, ruptures the toughest materials. Allow for proper sealing.

Siding & Trim. Check all siding and trim for damage (cracking and splitting), decay, and tightness of fit. Damaged materials should be repaired or replaced and the condition which caused the problem corrected. Loose nails (caused by normal expansion and contraction) should be reset. Additional nails or screws may be needed.



Painted Surfaces. All painted surfaces should be inspected for peeling, deterioration, or normal wear. Sometimes peeling paint can be caused by condensation. Paint life will vary with the method of application (brush, spray, etc.) and the exposure of the surface to the elements. To avoid paint scraping and removal, repaint before the paint peels, cracks, or blisters.

Caulking. Caulking should be checked at all joints. Loose caulk will permit water to enter. Decay or ice damage may result. Also, air leaks through these joints will lead to heat and energy losses.

Roof Surfaces. Check the roof surface for loose, damaged, or missing shingles. Check between the tabs on asphalt shingles, as granules wear off here first and cause leaks. Older slate and tile roofs should be inspected and maintained regularly by a professional roofer or inspector. In most cases, the nails which hold the slates fail before the slates.

Landscaping. Trim trees and shrubs away from the house or roof.



ASK THE INSPECTOR

I had hardwired smoke detectors that kept going off in the house I just bought. I finally turned off the breaker because they would not stop. I replaced them with hard-wired battery back up. I installed them and plugged in the harness but did not turn on the breaker for the power. I used lithium 10-year batteries, and within three weeks, all the batteries have died. Any clue as to what is going on?

Erick's Response:

The main source of power that the smoke detectors need is 110 volts. The batteries in your smoke detectors are only for back up during a power failure.

The "ten-year" lithium battery claim, has to do with the ability of the battery to store its charge. It's the "shelf life," so to speak. A standard battery, on a shelf, "dies" after a couple of years. The lithium can go longer, hence the ten-year claim. When you use any battery, even the lithium, it drains their capacity.

The smoke detectors were constantly being powered from the battery and not the 110-volt circuit as they were designed for.

DID YOU KNOW?

Use a rough dry paint roller to clean dirty window screens. This will remove all of the dust, lint and dirt on the screen.