



Agency of Human Services  
**Department of Health**  
Environmental Health  
108 Cherry Street – PO Box 70  
Burlington, VT 05402-0070  
**HealthVermont.gov**  
[toll free] 800-439-8550

Dear Village Resident:

The Vermont Department of Health is offering free drinking water test kits to private well owners in your village. This offer is provided through the Vermont Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative, which assists villages without community wastewater systems.

In Vermont, 55% of households rely on septic systems and over 200 villages do not have sewer systems. This can affect a village's economic development, public health and environmental benefits. To overcome this challenge, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and initiative partners are looking to help identify cost-effective water and wastewater solutions for your village.

As part of the overall initiative, it is important to understand local drinking water quality. Drinking water in villages served by private wells can be susceptible to contamination from historic land use and development. If a septic system is located close to a drinking water well, the water quality could be compromised. Other sources of contamination could be related to bedrock geology, which means the contaminants are naturally occurring.

To determine whether nearby septic systems or other naturally occurring contaminants are affecting your well, the Health Department is offering you a **free** drinking water test kit. This test kit normally costs \$159.

The drinking water test kit include tests for:

1. Bacteria (total coliform/*E. coli*)
2. Inorganic chemicals (arsenic, chloride, copper, fluoride, hardness, iron, lead, manganese, nitrate, nitrite, sodium and uranium)
3. Gross alpha radiation

Testing is the only way of knowing whether contaminants are in your drinking water and if they are affecting the village as a whole. The results will help inform you of your drinking water quality, help identify your village's needs, and help inform state policy and rulemaking to support solutions for community wastewater issues.

We will be sampling water in your village on \_\_\_\_\_.  
We will get in touch with you by phone or email to schedule a time to sample your water, should you choose to participate.





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We have enclosed a survey to better understand the drinking water test results and to compare the test results with other villages. Please have the completed survey ready by the time you have your water sampled.

Some contaminant levels can vary throughout the year. The Health Department will only provide one test kit, but you may want to plan on testing your well on a regular basis. The Health Department recommends that you test for bacteria once a year, and for inorganic chemicals and gross alpha once every five years to make sure your drinking water is safe.

DEC and the Health Department have partnered with Mark Johnson of RCAP Solutions, one of the nonprofit organizations that make up the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP). Mark will be doing the sampling. He will contact you and other villagers who return the survey to schedule a date and time to do the sampling. The sampling will be done in one or two days, so it may not be possible for everyone to participate.

Please note that test results analyzed through any Vermont-certified laboratory are considered public record.

If you have any questions, please call Sille Larsen, Water Resources Engineer with Health Department Private Drinking Water Program, at 802-863-7233.

You can find more information about the Vermont Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative, here: [villagewastewatersolutions.vermont.gov](http://villagewastewatersolutions.vermont.gov)

For more information about wells and drinking water, visit: [healthvermont.gov/water](http://healthvermont.gov/water).

