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| DHS Logo - Color no Text | **Private Well Water Workbook**  Template Letters for Common Contaminants |

These letters can be used by local health departments on their own letterhead to share test results on arsenic, bacteria, and nitrate in private wells. **Yellow boxes** **must be completed prior to sending the letters.** Be sure to include any attachments or enclosures that are listed in the letter.

[**Arsenic** levels greater than 10 µg/L 2](#_Toc509309821)

[**Arsenic** levels less than 10 µg/L 3](#_Toc509309822)

[**Arsenic** not detected 4](#_Toc509309823)

[**Bacteria** detected 5](#_Toc509309824)

[**Bacteria** not detected 6](#_Toc509309825)

[**Nitrate** levels greater than 10 mg/L 7](#_Toc509309826)

[**Nitrate** levels less than 10 mg/L 8](#_Toc509309827)

[**Nitrate** not detected 9](#_Toc509309828)

**Wisconsin Department of Health Services**

Division of Public Health | Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh | dhsenvhealth@wi.gov

P-02159 (05/2018)

|  |
| --- |
| **Arsenic** levels greater than 10 µg/L |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location.The level of arsenic found in your well was arsenic result. The level of arsenic in your well is higher than Wisconsin’s groundwater standard for arsenic of 10 micrograms per liter (µg/L).

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|  | **Based on the level of arsenic found in your well, we recommend that you do not use the water for drinking or preparing food.** It is safe to use the water for bathing, washing dishes, and other household chores. |

Because the arsenic levels in your well can vary, we recommend that you retest your well if you have not done so already. This will let you know if the results from the first test are accurate. When collecting the sample, be sure to follow the directions in the testing kit. For more details, see the Department of Natural Resources video on how to properly collect a water sample: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Groundwater/arsenic/>

Arsenic is a natural element found in soil and rocks throughout Wisconsin. It is also found in old pesticides, treated wood, and certain foods such as grains. High levels of arsenic can cause skin rashes, stomach issues, and cancer. Infants and young children are especially sensitive to arsenic as high levels can increase the risk of lung cancer and may affect learning.

I have enclosed two publications with information on the potential health effects of arsenic and steps to take to protect yourself: [*Arsenic in Well Water*](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p4/p45012.pdf)(DHS) and [*Arsenic in Drinking Water*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0062.pdf) (DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County

|  |
| --- |
| **Arsenic** levels less than 10 µg/L |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location.The level of arsenic found in your well was arsenic result. The level of arsenic in your well is lower than Wisconsin’s groundwater standard for arsenic of 10 micrograms per liter (µg/L).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Based on the level of arsenic found in your well, you can use the water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other household chores.** |

**Because the arsenic levels in your well can vary, we recommend that you retest your well if you have not done so already.** This will let you know if the results from the first test are accurate. When collecting the sample, be sure to follow the directions in the testing kit. For more details, see DNR’s video on how to properly collect a water sample: [dnr.wi.gov/topic/groundwater/arsenic/](http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/groundwater/arsenic/)

We also recommend that you test your well water for arsenic once a year from now on because arsenic levels in well water can change over time. You should also test for arsenic if you see a change in the color of your water, notice staining of your faucets, or the water levels in your well change.

Arsenic is a natural element found in soil and rocks throughout Wisconsin. It is also found in old pesticides, treated wood, and certain foods such as grains. High levels of arsenic can cause skin rashes, stomach issues, and cancer. Infants and young children are especially sensitive to arsenic as high levels can increase the risk of lung cancer and may affect learning.

I have enclosed two publications with more information on arsenic: *Arsenic in Private Well Water* (DHS) and [*Arsenic in Drinking Water*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0062.pdf) (DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County

|  |
| --- |
| **Arsenic** not detected |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location. Arsenic was not found in your well.

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|  | **Because arsenic was not found in your well, you can use the water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other household chores.** |

Arsenic levels in well water can change over time. We recommend that you test your well water for arsenic once every five years. You should also test for arsenic if you see a change in the color of your water, notice staining of your faucets, or the water levels in your well change.

Arsenic is a natural element found in soil and rocks throughout Wisconsin. It is also found in old pesticides, treated wood, and certain foods such as grains. High levels of arsenic can cause skin rashes, stomach issues, and cancer. Infants and young children are especially sensitive to arsenic as high levels can increase the risk of lung cancer and may affect learning.

I have enclosed two publications with more information on arsenic: *Arsenic in Private Well Water* (DHS) and [*Arsenic in Drinking Water*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0062.pdf) (DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County

|  |
| --- |
| **Bacteria** detected |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location. Total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria were found in your well. The presence of these bacteria indicates that your well may be contaminated by feces (poop) or other harmful bacteria.

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|  | **Because bacteria were found in your well, we recommend that you do not use the water for drinking or preparing food.** You should also use caution before using the water for washing dishes or bathing. For steps on what to do if your well has bacteria, see the *Bacteria in Private Well Water* factsheet. |

We recommend that you retest your well water for bacteria if you have not done so already. This will let you know if the results from the first test are accurate. It is important to collect the sample carefully so that it is not accidentally contaminated.

If bacteria are present, water can pose an immediate health risk. Bacteria contamination can cause flu-like illnesses with symptoms including diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, cramps, or fever. Young children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems may be at greater risk.

I have enclosed two publications with more information on bacteria contamination and steps to take to protect yourself: *Bacteria in Private Well Water* (DHS) and [*Bacteriological Contamination of Drinking Water Wells*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0003.pdf) (DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County

|  |
| --- |
| **Bacteria** not detected |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location. Total coliform and *E. coli* bacteria were not found in your well.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Because bacteria were not found in your well, you can use the water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other household chores.** |

Bacteria can contaminate wells when work is done on the well, if the well was not built properly, or if there are nearby sources of animal or human waste. We recommend that you test your well for bacteria at least once a year. You should also test for bacteria if you notice a change in the color, taste, odor, or cloudiness of your water.

I have enclosed two publications with more information on bacteria contamination: *Bacteria in Private Well Water* (DHS) and [*Bacteriological Contamination of Drinking Water Wells*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0003.pdf) (DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County

|  |
| --- |
| **Nitrate** levels greater than 10 mg/L |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location.The level of nitrate found in your well was nitrate result. The level of nitrate in your well is higher than Wisconsin’s groundwater standard for nitrate of 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L).

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|  | Based on the level of nitrate found in your well, we recommend that:   * **Infants less than six months old and women who are or may become pregnant immediately stop drinking the water and stop using the water for cooking.** * **Everyone avoid regular use of the water for drinking and cooking.**   You can use the water for bathing, washing dishes, and other household chores. |

We recommend that you retest your well water for nitrate if you have not done so already. This will let you know if the results from the first test are accurate.

Nitrate is a naturally occurring molecule that is found in foods, fertilizers, and animal and human waste.

Nitrate can impact blood’s ability to carry oxygen. High levels of nitrate can cause methemoglobinemia or “blue baby syndrome” in infants. Studies also suggest that high levels of nitrate may cause birth defects, thyroid problems, and certain kinds of cancer.

I have enclosed two publications with information on the potential health effects of nitrate and steps to take to protect yourself: *Nitrate in Private Well Water* (DHS) and [*Nitrate in Drinking Water*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0001.pdf)(DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County

|  |
| --- |
| **Nitrate** levels less than 10 mg/L |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location.The level of nitrate found in your well was nitrate result. The level of nitrate in your well is lower than Wisconsin’s groundwater standard for nitrate of 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Based on the level of nitrate found in your well, you can use the water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other household chores.** |

Nitrate levels in well water can change over time. We recommend that you retest your well water for nitrate at least once a year. You should also test for nitrate if there is an infant less than six months of age or a woman who is or may become pregnant in your household.

I have enclosed two publications with more information on nitrate: *Nitrate in Private Well Water* (DHS) and [*Nitrate in Drinking Water*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0001.pdf)(DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County

|  |
| --- |
| **Nitrate** not detected |

Date

First and Last Name

Street Address

City, WI Zip

Dear Resident Name:

We were recently notified of well test results from your private well, Wisconsin Unique Well Number, located at Well location. Nitrate was not found in your well.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Because nitrate was not found in your well, you can use the water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and other household chores.** |

Nitrate levels in well water can change over time. We recommend that you retest your well water for nitrate at least once a year. You should also test for nitrate if there is an infant less than six months of age or a woman who is or may become pregnant in your household.

I have enclosed two publications with more information on nitrate: *Nitrate in Private Well Water* (DHS) and [*Nitrate in Drinking Water*](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/dg/dg0001.pdf)(DNR).

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have further questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

County