



Water Fair at Ghost Ranch

Free private well water quality testing opportunities

Water fairs

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) – Ground Water Quality Bureau conducts eight water fairs a year throughout the state. Water fairs provide field testing for arsenic, electrical conductivity, fluoride, iron, nitrate, pH, and sulfate. To learn more, visit:

www.env.nm.gov/gwqb/water-fairs/

Field offices

Some NMED field offices provide limited testing for Iron, Fluoride, and Nitrate. To learn more, visit:

www.env.nm.gov/liquid_waste/free-well-water-testing-2/

These testing options are screenings and do not substitute for laboratory tested and certified results.

More Information

New Mexico Environment
Department

www.env.nm.gov

Office of the State Engineer

www.ose.state.nm.us

New Mexico Department of Health -
Environmental Public Health
Tracking

nmtracking.org

This brochure was produced by the New Mexico Environment Department Ground Water Quality Bureau. To learn more about the bureau, please visit:

www.env.nm.gov/gwqb/

(505) 827-2900



Science | Innovation | Collaboration | Compliance

Well Ownership

A guide for private well owners

Water quality testing

Well maintenance

Record keeping

Best management practices



Your well, your water, your responsibility

As a private well owner, you are responsible for testing your own water to ensure that your water quality is safe.

When should I test my water?

▪ Initially

- When a new well is installed
- When there is no record of testing
- If you are purchasing a new home with a well

▪ Annually

- Test in the spring

▪ Other reasons

- Unexplained illness in household
- Sudden change in water quality: taste, color, or odor
- After septic system failure
- After a natural disaster: wildfire or flood
- Neighbors are having water quality problems
- Someone in your household is pregnant or nursing a child less than 6 months old
- Prolonged drought in your area

What do I test for?

The New Mexico Environment Department recommends that you test your water well annually for **bacteria**, **nitrate**, and **arsenic** (most common contaminants in NM). **Uranium** is also recommended every five years.

Below is a table of other characteristics and what you should consider testing for.

Characteristics	Consider testing for
Visible black flakes	Manganese
Brown, yellow, or red tint	Iron
Rotten egg odor or taste	Hydrogen sulfide
Metallic odor or taste	pH, iron, zinc, copper, lead
Salty odor or taste	Total Dissolved Solids
Gasoline/Oil odor or taste	Hydrocarbon Scan, Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs)
Red, brown or black stains on clothing or fixtures	Iron, manganese
Green or blue stains on clothing or fixtures	Copper
White deposits/soap scum on clothing or fixtures	Total Dissolved Solids, calcium and magnesium
Discoloration of children's teeth	Fluoride
Gastrointestinal illness	E.-coli bacteria, sulfates, giardia

Where can I get my water tested?

Water samples should be analyzed by a certified or accredited laboratory. A list of laboratories is available at

www.env.nm.gov/drinking_water/certified-labs/

Check with individual labs for pricing.

Maintaining your well

▪ Inspect your well

- Visually inspect your wellhead on a regular basis for signs of damage like cracks in the well casing or damage to the well cap. Make sure the well remains sealed and free of debris, and the ground slopes away from the wellhead.

▪ Maintain records

- Keep records of maintenance, test results and repairs.
- Keep a copy of your well permit. Information on your permit can be found at the Office of the State Engineer.
- Keep records of your septic system maintenance. Septic tanks should be pumped every three to five years.

▪ Well protection

- Keep chemicals at least 100 ft away from wellhead
- Do not house livestock or animals near wellhead
- Do not store vehicles near wellhead