



# Home Tips®



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## Q & A

### Water Quality Testing?

By Ben Fontan, PRO-LAB



Today more than ever, people are concerned about what they put into their bodies. Purchasing healthy and organic products to eat is becoming more and more prevalent throughout our society.



The water that we drink is at least as important as the food we eat. Many companies' advertising strategies emphasize that their products contain "clean water." However, many consumers are skeptical of such claims and come to their own conclusions after doing their own research. In addition, frequent reports in the media describing the dangers of polluted or toxic water working its way into our neighborhoods and communities have caused people to want to know exactly what makes up the water they consume on a daily basis and whether the water in their homes is safe to drink and use.

With this heightened awareness of potentially overstated marketing claims, coupled with the very real risks of consuming unsafe water, people increasingly request confirmation and details concerning the quality of the water in their current or prospective homes. As a result, water quality testing is in high demand.

Some companies offer consumers "free water testing";

however, these companies may simply be offering consumers the opportunity to purchase their water delivery services or purification systems. It is important for consumers to understand what is involved in water quality testing, and home inspectors can help provide that understanding by becoming familiar with the following points:



**Both city water and well water should be tested.** Knowing your own community or home's situation and level of risk is key. For example, wells can contain bacteria and pesticides, and they can be a host for other contaminants.

**Know what you're looking for (for example, bacteria, lead, pesticides).** Because home inspectors offer a full range of services, assessing each customer's needs and concerns about their specific water quality situation is extremely important.

**When choosing a water testing service, look for a lab with proper state and federal accreditations.** As the nation's leading environmental testing laboratory, PRO-LAB can assist you with all of your testing needs. It's important to note that PRO-LAB is the largest supporter of the home inspection industry and understands that turnaround times are critical to completing real estate transactions.

Water testing is mandatory for some loans, including FHA and VA loans.



The following guidelines were set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in a December 2005 letter titled "US HUD FHA Mortgagee Letter 2005-ML-48": "Well (individual water system) test or inspection required if mandated by state or local jurisdiction; if there is knowledge that well water may be contaminated; when the water supply relies upon a water purification system due to presence of contaminants; or when there is evidence of:

- corrosion of pipes (plumbing)
- areas of intensive agriculture within 14 miles
- coal mining or gas drilling operations within 14 miles
- dump, junkyard, landfill, factory, gas station, or dry cleaning operation within within 14 miles
- unusually objectionable taste, smell or appearance of well water

(superseding the guidance in Mortgagee Letter 95-34 that requires well water testing in the absence of local or state regulations)." (Note: The entire letter can be found at [http://inspectapedia.com/water/FHA\\_HUD\\_Mortgagee\\_Water\\_Test\\_Letter.php](http://inspectapedia.com/water/FHA_HUD_Mortgagee_Water_Test_Letter.php).)

Use proper materials to conduct a water quality test. You should never use an empty plastic water bottle to collect a sample. Upon request, PRO-LAB can provide sterile water bottles with proper preservatives and will send them to you in

a styrofoam cooler equipped with freezer packs.

Check with the lab for proper packaging guidelines and turnaround times for results. Finding the right lab will make it easier for you to receive a report with results that are clear to the homeowner. PRO-LAB has been in the industry since 1998 and provides the most comprehensive reports in the industry.

With growing awareness among consumers of the importance of testing the quality of the water in and around their homes, it is important to be aware of how to address these concerns and know how to access testing and results related to water quality.

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If you have a question, comment, or home tip, send to us at [rod@cbiga.com](mailto:rod@cbiga.com). We reserve the right to edit published questions for length.

## Thought For The Month

"WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU DANCED?"

## A Tip Of The Hat To:

Sara Lym

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*Thank You*

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