

# Does Imposed

## Warning against digging wells to avoid paying water charges

Paul Melia

HOMEOWNERS have been warned not to dig private wells in an effort to avoid water charges because of health concerns.

More than one in 10 private wells was contaminated with E. coli last year.

The bug can result in conditions, ranging from mild gastroenteritis to severe diarrhoea and, in some cases, blood poisoning and kidney failure.

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Drinking Water Report for 2012 says a "significant portion" of private wells are contaminated.

It warned that homeowners could be putting their families' health at risk.

"With the introduction of water charges, consumers may be tempted to drill private wells in an attempt to reduce costs," it says.

"EPA analysis indicates that a significant portion of private wells are contaminated and not suitable for consumption without treatment. As such, private homeowners need to be aware that if they replace their supply from the public mains with a private well, they are taking on a major responsibility of ensuring that the water is safe for drinking.

Owners of private wells should ensure that they are designed, located, installed and maintained properly. Otherwise, they are putting their health and that of their family at risk."

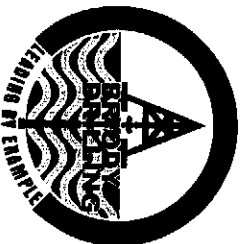
About 10pc of the population is served by private wells, but the water quality tends to be inferior to that provided by local authorities, the report finds.

One in every nine (47/ or 11.3pc) was found to be contaminated with E. coli last year, up from 82 (77pc) in 2011.

"The quality of drinking water from private supplies remains inferior to that from public supplies," EPA spokesman Ger O'Leary said.

"In 2012, the HSE reported a doubling of the number of VTEC cases, which is a particularly harmful form of E. coli.

"Transmission of VTEC can be from person to person, or be waterborne or foodborne. The second most common transmission route reported by the HSE is waterborne transmission. Disinfection kills all E. coli including VTEC and, while public water supplies are disinfected, not all private wells are."



## Patrick Briody & Sons LTD

Specialists Drilling Contractors

The Grove  
Rathangan  
Co. Kildare

VAT NO. IE 8214700Q

Email: [info@briodydrilling.com](mailto:info@briodydrilling.com)

Website: [www.briodydrilling.com](http://www.briodydrilling.com)

To Whom It May Concern

16-December,2013

Paul Melia's article in the Irish Independent on 13th Dec,2013 entitled " Warning against digging wells to avoid paying water charges" was in my opinion unbalanced and derogatory to Drilling Contractors who provide a professional and competent drilling service. See article attached in our Education & Information section....scroll to menu bar across home page to Education & Information section ) I accept his source was the Environmental Protection Agency Summary Report 2012;"The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland" ,however Mr Melia's article is out of context for a variety of reasons.

The EPA do not discourage people to install their own private wells . In fact EPA recently published a Drinking Water Advise No. 14 "Borehole Construction & Well Head Protection" . This document reinforces an earlier publication from the Institute of Geologists of Ireland entitled "Guidelines for Drilling Wells for private supplies" published 2007. Correct borehole design,drilling & installations minimise threats to groundwater contamination.The EPA is trying to discourage people from constructing poor standard water wells in inappropriate locations.At the same time ,it is trying to provide encouragement on how to construct wells properly.

Unfortunately there is still a void of information and legacy from practices past in terms of poor well siting or poorly constructed wells.A deep borehole quoted at a very competitive price per/mtr (per/ ft) is unlikely to be a properly sealed borehole and therefore shallow water from the subsoils is likely to ingress which may be a diluted version of the customer or their neighbours septic tank effluent or cattle urine or recent slurry spreading in the area. However,there are competent and experienced Drilling Contractors fully capable of adhering to good drilling practices and delivering properly constructed boreholes that can avoid flawed practices of well drilling and construction. You get what you pay for in this world.

A water supply form a properly constructed borehole with respect to borehole siting and adherence to good practices per above guidelines offers a wholesome supply of untreated groundwater(ie free of chemicals for example;chlorine,flouride),independently regulated water pressure and continuity of supply for a lifetime.

Up to 30% of potable water supply in Ireland is sourced from groundwater supplying both public water supplies and private wells.Experienced and competent Drillers would welcome well drilling standards to be both implemented and policed to regulate and drive improvements on well design,drilling and installation.But please Mr Melia when you are reporting....dont throw the baby out with the bath water.

Padraig Briody

Telephone: (045) 524360 (087) 2589313 Fax: (045) 524785  
Directors: Padraig Briody B. Comm., M.B.S.(Contracts), Aidan Briody (Operations).