Well owner's yearly checklist

For private wells in Suffolk and Hampton Roads. Never open electrical boxes yourself.

Every year

- [ ] Test for total coliform bacteria (and E. coli if positive) at a certified lab.
- [ ] Check the pressure tank's air charge with the pump off and the tank drained: about 2 psi below cut-in.
- [ ] Watch one full pump cycle: note cut-in, cut-out and how long the pump runs.
- [ ] Look at the wellhead: cap sealed, casing above grade, ground sloping away, nothing stored nearby.
- [ ] Replace whole-house filter cartridges on schedule.

Deep Suffolk wells: add to the test

- [ ] Fluoride (natural in parts of the deep aquifers; federal limit 4 mg/L).
- [ ] Sodium (relevant to low-sodium diets and softener use).
- [ ] Nitrate if the well is near fields or a septic system, or if anyone is pregnant or there is an infant.

Before hurricane season

- [ ] Label the pump breaker. Know where the main is.
- [ ] Confirm any generator can start the pump, with a proper transfer switch.
- [ ] Consider a lightning arrester at the control box or panel.
- [ ] Store drinking water.

After any work that opens the well

- [ ] Well disinfected before use (Virginia requires it).
- [ ] Chlorine flushed out, then a bacteria sample from a cold tap.

Your well record

Well depth:	Pump setting:
Pump make / size:	Installed:
Static water level:	Switch range (psi):
Tank size / air charge:	Last bacteria test:

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Well records from 2003 on are held electronically by the local Virginia Department of Health office; 1990 to 2003 on paper.