

This brochure has been prepared to provide helpful information in the planning and construction of your well. State law requires that all wells meet certain minimum standards for construction. These standards are outlined in Chapter 173-160 of the Washington Administrative Code. You and your well contractor share responsibility to ensure that the wells on your property are constructed to these standards.

A water right is not necessary if *less* than 5,000 gallons of water is used per day for household or industrial purposes and less than half an acre of lawn or non-commercial garden is irrigated. A water right is necessary if you will be using more than 5,000 gallons per day or want to irrigate a larger area. Contact the Department of Ecology's Water Resources Program Office for your county to obtain water right information (addresses and phone numbers on the back of this pamphlet).

CHOOSING A WELL CONTRACTOR

Only a licensed and bonded well contractor is permitted to construct wells in the state of Washington. The Department of Ecology (not the Department of Labor & Industries) must issue the license. To verify Washington State well contractor licenses, contact the appropriate Department of Ecology Regional Office for your county.

To choose a well contractor:

Step 1: Consult the following for the names of local well contractors:

- Yellow pages of the telephone directory
- Well equipment suppliers
- Well owners in your neighborhood
- The Department of Ecology

Step 2: Seek the following information about the contractor(s):

- Current license and insurance
- Experience
- References - former customers
- Reliability
- Competence

Step 3: Consult with the well contractor about the following:

- A. Obtaining a written contract for mutual protection.
- B. Insurance protection/proof of insurance.
- C. Construction of the well to include:
 1. Size of hole.
 2. Casing diameters, including reduction.
 3. Casing quality & material.
 4. Discuss estimated depth of well to be cased and total depth of well.
 5. Screening & perforation requirements if any (also called well development).
 6. Sealing requirements under state codes (WAC 173-160-075).
 7. Water quality & quantity tests.
 8. Filing a certified copy of the well log for the owner. Water well logs are filed at the Department of Ecology's Regional Offices. Well contractors are required to file well logs with the Department of Ecology **within 30 days after completion of the well.**
 9. A Department of Ecology identification tag. Beginning in 1997, well contractors will be required to attach well identification tags to all new wells and record the well identification number on the well log.
 10. Guarantee of materials and workmanship.

Step 4: The prospective well contractor should itemize an estimate of costs to include the following:

- A. Cost per foot of drilling.
- B. Cost per foot of casing.
- C. Cost of sealing materials and labor involved.
- D. Cost of other materials (drive shoe, screen, perforated casing, etc.).

- E. Cost of well development (including bailer test when appropriate).
- F. Cost of pump test on wells drilled under water right permit.
- G. Cost of pump installation, riser pipe, control box, wiring and wellcap, if appropriate.

Step 5: Well construction notification (start card) and fees:

All well contractors are required to notify the Department of Ecology of their intent to construct, reconstruct, or abandon a well at least 72 hours before starting work. Notification is submitted on forms available through Ecology's Regional Offices, the Benton-Franklin District Health Department's Environmental Health Division, licensed well contractors and county building departments. The fee for construction of new water wells depends upon the diameter of the casing. The property owner or the well contractor can pay the fee. Contact the appropriate regional office for current fee information.

Property Owner Responsibilities

Although normally the responsibility of the well contractor as part of the written contract, the property owner is ultimately held accountable for notifying the Department of Ecology at least **72 hours prior to well construction** and to pay the proper fee(s). It is also the responsibility of the property owner to be sure that any well on their property that is abandoned, unusable, or not intended for future use is properly decommissioned. Contact the Ecology Regional Office for your county if you have questions.

Do's and Don'ts

1. **Do** obtain a water right permit prior to construction if you intend to withdraw more than 5,000 gallons a day or irrigate more than 1/2 acre of non-commercial lawn or garden (estimate your needs).
2. **Do** consider your neighbor's present well location, septic system location, and other potential contaminants in locating your own well.
3. **Do** make certain that you and the water well contractor fully understand the terms of your written contract.
4. **Do** contact your local health department prior to drilling the well on lots where a sewage disposal system will be required.
5. **Do** select a proper pump and water system adaptable to your present and future needs.
6. **Do** have your well water analyzed annually to determine bacterial and nitrate content.
7. **Do** properly house and protect your pump and other equipment.
8. **Do** arrange to have your pump equipment serviced periodically.
9. **Do** make sure that the contractor files a copy of the well log with the appropriate Ecology office.
10. **Do** obtain a certified copy of the well log on your completed well, including a bill of materials and record of work performed.
11. **Do** make sure the contractor seals the well.
12. **Do** decommission any well on your property that is abandoned, unusable, not intended for future use, or that poses an environmental, safety, or public health hazard.
13. **Do** make sure your contractor attaches a Department of Ecology well identification tag to your well.
14. **Don't** hire an unlicensed contractor.
15. **Don't** purchase your pump prior to well construction.
16. **Don't** store chemicals such as pesticides, fuels, fertilizers, paints or oils in your well house or within 100 feet of your well.
17. **Don't** ask a contractor to construct a well that will not meet state standards (you would be subject to probable future costs to remedy the resultant deficiencies, and the contractor's license would be in jeopardy.)

Department of Ecology Regional Offices:

Benton County: Central Regional Office
15 W. Yakima Ave, Ste 200
Yakima, WA 98902-3401
(509) 575-2490

Franklin County: Eastern Regional Office
N. 4601 Monroe, Suite 100
Spokane, WA 99205
(509) 456-2926

Website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wells/well-home.html>

For more information or advice:

Benton-Franklin Health District
Environmental Health Division
7102 W. Okanogan Place
Kennewick, WA 99336
509.460.4205

Website: <http://www.bfhd.wa.gov>

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Advice for Prospective Water Well Owners

The Single Family Well



www.bfhd.wa.gov

