



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Soil and Water Resources
Fact Sheet

Fact Sheet 92-15

Before You Have a Well Drilled

A home without a water supply is virtually unlivable. The importance of water for everyday living with modern conveniences bears this fact out. The most common water supply for a home that is not served by a public system is a drilled well. The cost of a well is relatively small in comparison to the home itself, but without a water supply the home value depreciates greatly. Don't overlook its importance when you are considering hiring a drilling contractor. This fact sheet discusses some of the important points to consider and investigate before you have a well drilled.

Estimate Water Needs

Don't overlook items that you may take for granted in a city with a public water supply. A home with its own well can offer the same conveniences, provided there is enough water. Each home needs water for everyday use, seasonal use such as lawn watering, and for fire protection if a pond or stream is not located nearby. On average, a home needs a well that can produce at least 7 gallons per minute (gpm) to meet the demand during peak water use times of the day. If a well produces less than this quantity, an alternate storage system should be installed and budgeted for when figuring water supply costs. As a conservative estimate, an alternate storage system should be sized to hold a days worth of water at an average of 75 gallons per person per day.

Determine Water Availability

The geologic conditions, or the type of material beneath the ground surface will dictate how much water can be obtained from a drilled well. The Division can provide general information on the ground water availability of an area by reviewing existing well records and ground water studies on file. This report will include information on the type of water-bearing formation, expected well yield, static water level, and depth to bedrock.

Local drilling contractors, drawing on their experience of drilling in a certain area, may be able to give you information on the probable depth of a well, and

possibly the quality and quantity of water that can be expected.

Select a Water Well Drilling Contractor

Most water well drilling contractors operate within a one to three county radius of their business. Experienced contractors who have worked in an area will be familiar with local conditions. As a rule, it is a good idea to obtain information and quotes from several drilling contractors for comparison. The information obtained should include the following:

Ask Your Contractor

- What is the contractor's reputation? Ask for two or three references.
- Is the contractor registered and bonded through the Ohio Department of Health?
- Does the contractor have adequate equipment in good condition to do the job right?
- Does the contractor have adequate liability insurance to protect you?
- Will the contractor furnish a written contract, specifying the terms and conditions of the job?

Items to be Covered in the Contract

To protect yourself as a buyer against any dissatisfaction or legal action that may follow, you should have a written contract. The contract should include:

- Proposed borehole diameter.
- Size and type of casing.
- Type of grout to be used to properly seal the casing.
- How the well will be developed upon completion.
- How long the well will be developed.
- If the well is anticipated to be completed in sand and gravel, specifications on the well screen to be used and how it will be installed.

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- The amount of time the well will be test pumped on completion.
- Date that the contractor will furnish a well log and drilling report.
- Any guarantee on materials and workmanship.
- An itemized listing of the charges.
- Verification that the contractor is able to conduct business. Water well contractors must register with the Ohio Department of Health annually to conduct business in Ohio. This registration and prerequisite bonding requirements afford the consumer with protection against violations of state private water system rules. To determine if a contractor is registered, contact your local health department, or contact the Ohio Department of Health at (614) 466-1390.

Hiring a Water Well Drilling Contractor

Your careful investigation of several drillers will lead you to select a contractor to drill your well. After the contract is agreed upon and signed, you should keep the following principles in mind:

- Trust the driller's judgement in solving unforeseen difficulties that may come up.
- If original construction plans must be changed, listen to the driller's explanation and trust his recommendations.
- Don't expect the contractor to work for nothing if the well does not fulfill expectations. The driller must work with the natural geologic conditions as they exist.

Drill Before You Build

Dry holes or low yielding wells are not uncommon in certain regions of Ohio. Too many homes have inadequate water supplies because the property owner did not have a well drilled before the home was built. An expensive house with a poor water supply is not a sound investment. The recommended procedure is to have a well drilled before the home is built. In areas of marginal or questionable ground water supply, the prospective buyer may wish to obtain an option on the property with permission to have a well drilled first.

A List of Don'ts

- Don't take an individual's word that an ample supply of water is available from a well without first obtaining existing information from the Division of Soil and Water Resources and a reputable drilling contractor.
- Don't locate a well too close to sources of contamination; contact your county health department for existing regulations.
- Don't have the well drilled after the home is built.
- Don't hire a well drilling contractor without inquiring about his reputation.
- Don't compare driller's abilities and proposals merely on the per foot prices they charge.
- Don't give the job without a written contract.
- Don't buy a cheap well! Poor materials and workmanship may prove to be more costly at a later date.

For additional information on private wells and water systems, and ground water resources, contact:

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