

Private Well FAQs

Does it matter where I drill my well?

Yes. (From WAC 173-160-171)

(1) The proposed water well shall be located where it is not subject to ponding and is not in the floodway, except as provided in chapter [86.16](#) RCW.

(2) It shall be protected from a one hundred-year flood and from any surface or subsurface drainage capable of impairing the quality of the groundwater supply.

(3) All wells shall not be located within certain minimum distances of known or potential sources of contamination.

(b) Minimum set-back distances for water wells... are:

(i) Five feet from any existing building structure or building projection. Water wells shall not be located in garages, barns, storage buildings or dwellings. When locating a nonpublic water well adjacent to a building, the well location shall be measured from the building sewer and closest building projection.

(ii) Fifty feet from a septic tank, septic holding tank, septic containment vessel, septic pump chamber, and septic distribution box.

(iii) Fifty feet from building sewers, public sewers, collection and nonperforated sewer distribution lines except building drains.

(iv) One hundred feet from the edge of a drain field, proposed drain field which has been approved by a health authority, and reserve drain field areas.

(v) One hundred feet from all other sources or potential sources of contamination (i.e. roads) except for solid waste landfills.

(vi) One thousand feet from the boundary of a permitted or previously permitted solid waste landfill as defined by the permit; or one thousand feet from the property boundary of other solid waste landfills. Except, a variance may be granted if documentation is provided that demonstrates the construction and operation of the well adjacent to the landfill will not further degrade the environment and will not cause a public health risk.

The WA state Department of Health also requires water systems to maintain a sanitary control area of 100 feet around wells, and 200 feet around springs.

Does it matter if my well protection zone goes beyond my property line?

Yes it does. You have NO control beyond your property line. If the protection zone of your well goes beyond your property line then the county will require the recording of an easement.

Where can I find well records?

You can get well records from the Department of Ecology [website](#).

What do I need to do to have a well drilled?

Contact a well drilling company. They normally take care of all permitting thru the Department of Ecology (ECY). ECY is responsible for well drilling regulations and requirements. More information on drilling a well can be found on their [website](#).

How deep will my well need to be?

The depth to ground water varies so you will not know for certain until you drill your well. You may get an idea by talking to a neighbor, contacting a well driller or looking at well reports on the Department of Ecology [website](#).

Do you have a list of well drillers?

You can get a list of licensed companies from the Department of Ecology [website](#).

What if I just want to take my water from a stream or spring?

You will need a water right if you plan to use any amount of surface water (from a river, stream, spring, or lake) for any purpose. Before applying for a water right or seeking to change an existing water right, we recommend a pre-application consultation with the Department of Ecology regional staff. They can advise you on water supply options. You can reach them at the Eastern Region Help desk: 509-329-3400.