



Ohio Department of Health  
Bureau of Environmental Health  
Private Water Systems

“To protect and improve the health of all Ohioans”

## Steps for Constructing a Private Water System (PWS)

The following seven steps will help guide a homeowner or home builder through the process of having a private water system (PWS) constructed or altered on your property. Private water systems may include wells, cisterns, hauled water storage tanks, springs and ponds.

### New Construction or Alteration:

- 1) Before you begin the process of constructing or altering a private water system, you should first review the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Residential Private Water Systems (PWS) rules, Chapter 3701-28 of the Ohio Administrative Code. Both contractor AND homeowner are responsible for following the PWS rules. If you have questions about the rules, now is the time to contact your local health department or an ODH Residential PWS Program representative to get answers. The PWS rules are available at your local health department or can be found on the ODH Web page at: [www.odh.ohio.gov/rules/final/f3701-28.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/rules/final/f3701-28.aspx)
- 2) If you plan to hire a contractor to construct your private water system, the contractor must be registered and bonded with the Ohio Department of Health. A list of registered PWS contractors can be found on the ODH Web page at: [www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/eh/water/water1.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/eh/water/water1.aspx). You may also get a list of registered contractors by contacting your local or state health department.
- 3) A PWS permit from the local health department must be obtained before the construction of the private water system begins. **Note:** Penalty fees will be assessed for beginning construction without a permit.
  - a. On the permit application, the health department will ask you to provide the name of the registered contractor you intend to hire;
  - b. A Site Plan of your property, showing the location of the PWS, must be included with the application. The system must be located safe distances from possible sources of contamination (example: septic systems);
  - c. The Site Plan may be prepared by you, your registered contractor or the local health department. The local health department may require they visit your property in order to prepare the Site Plan;
  - d. Additional plans will be required for ponds, multi-family units and buildings (as defined in Ohio Revised Code Section 3781.06);
- 4) Once you receive the approved PWS permit from the local health department, give the contractor their copy of the permit. Your PWS contractor must have this document prior to beginning work. The PWS permit expires one year from the date of issue.
- 5) If there is need to change the location of the PWS as shown on the Site Plan, you must contact the local health department to receive approval prior to the construction.

- 6) Once the PWS installation is complete, there are required forms that must be submitted to the local health department within 30 days. Based upon the type of system installed, the required form(s) include:
  - a. Well log: A well log is a record of the geologic formations drilled through, the total depth of the well, the amount of water the well produces (well yield) and other information about the well. **Note:** The driller is required to provide a copy of a well log to the local health department, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the homeowner;
  - b. Completion forms: Well/Pump Completion form (HEA 5239); Pond Water Supply form (HEA 5237); Spring Water Supply form (HEA 5238); Cistern/Hauled Water Storage Tank form (HEA 5203); **Note:** All completion forms include disinfection and filtration information and can be found at the local health department or on the ODH Web page at: [www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/eh/water/water1.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/eh/water/water1.aspx).
- 7) Final Inspection: You must contact the local health department to schedule a final inspection, which includes the sampling of the water for bacterial quality.
  - a. Before your private water system is approved, it must pass inspection and must be free from total coliform and E coli bacteria. **Note:** To learn more about total coliform and E coli, contact your local health department or visit the Residential Private Water Systems (PWS) Program Web site at: [www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/eh/water/water1.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/eh/water/water1.aspx).

**Any well (including agricultural wells), cistern, hauled water storage tank, spring or pond that is not approved as a residential PWS cannot be used as a private water system unless the system meets the requirements outlined in the Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-28. If you want to use an existing water source, you must follow the “New Construction” permitting process as described in steps 1 through 7 above.**

### **Helpful Hints:**

- To learn about the availability of groundwater and the depth of wells in your area, you can review well logs at the ODNR, Division of Water Web site at: [www.dnr.state.oh.us/water/maptechs/wellogs/app/](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/water/maptechs/wellogs/app/). On this Web site, well logs can be found by searching by the county, township, road and/or property address. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can call the ODNR Division of Water at (614) 265-6740 to receive copies of well logs.
- It is suggested you contact several registered contractors to get written estimates for the construction of your PWS. It is important you ask the contractor to explain how they plan to construct or alter your water system.
- If possible, be present to observe the construction of your PWS. You may want to take pictures for documentation and record keeping. Depending on the drilling equipment used and the depth of the well, you can expect the drilling process to take several hours to several days.

### **Where can I get more information?**

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