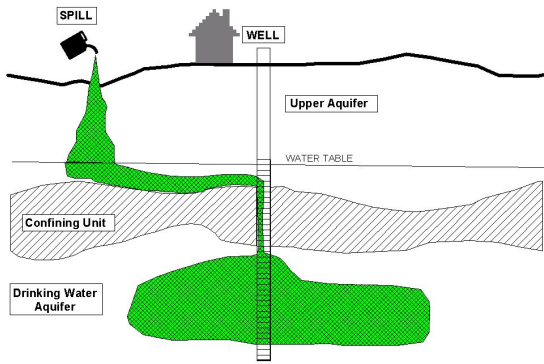


Why should I seal my abandoned/unused well?

Unsealed abandoned wells provide direct pathways for contaminants to quickly enter groundwater. Groundwater is the main source of drinking water for most of the people in the metro area – protecting it is everybody’s business.



Also, when you sell your home or property, you have to disclose the status of the well on your property. Many times the buyer’s mortgage lender will not provide the loan unless the well is sealed or it is being used.

So, if you have an abandoned well, you may want to have it sealed now so that in the future you can sell your home more easily.

What does the law require?

By law, a well must be in use, be under a maintenance permit, or sealed by a licensed contractor. A well must be sealed if:

- the well is not in use;

- the well is contaminated;
- the well has been improperly sealed in the past;
- the well threatens the quality of the groundwater; or
- the well otherwise poses a threat to health or safety.

If you have an unused well and wish to keep the well for future use, you may apply for a special maintenance permit from the Minnesota Department of Health. The permit requires an annual fee (currently \$100), and is only issued if the well meets minimum sanitary requirements.

How are wells sealed?

State law requires that the sealing be done by a licensed well contractor. Don’t try to seal the well yourself. A licensed well contractor has the necessary equipment and expertise to seal your well properly. The contractor can also handle all of the necessary paperwork.

Before sealing the well, the contractor will remove any pumping equipment that may still be in place and remove any debris or other obstructions from the well. The well is then sealed by pumping a grout mixture into the well. The law requires that the grout is pumped in from the bottom of the well up to ensure the entire well is filled. Only a licensed contractor will have the necessary equipment to do the job correctly.

When the job is done, the contractor will submit a sealing record to the Minnesota Department of Health. You will also get a copy of the well sealing record from the licensed well contractor. Keep it in a safe place. It provides proof that the well has been properly sealed, and no longer poses a hazard.

What if I still use my old well?

If the well is still in use, you don’t need to do anything -- even if you just use your old well for watering your lawn. If you use it for your home’s water supply, you can keep doing that as well.

How much will it cost?

The costs will vary depending on the depth and diameter of the well. Typical costs in this area range from \$500 to \$1,000 for sealing the average 4-inch diameter domestic well. If the well is very deep or has a large diameter, costs will be higher. Also, if access to the well is difficult, there may be additional charges.

What costs are covered?

Only the direct costs for sealing the well are covered. This might include the costs of pulling the old pump and equipment, the grouting material, and pumping the grout into the old well. If access to the well necessitates other costs (e.g., to remove and replace shrubbery, or to alter a structure to provide access), they will not be covered.

How do I find a licensed well contractor?

Unfortunately, District policy prohibits the distribution of lists or recommendations for well sealing contractors. To find a contractor, look in your Yellow Pages directory under “Well Drilling and Service” for a listing of businesses that perform well abandonment. The Minnesota Department of Health also has a list of licensed contractors.

Where can I get more information?

For information about the CRWD well-sealing cost-share program, call the District offices at (651) 644-8888 or check the District’s web page at:

<http://www.capitolregionwd.org> .

For information about the rules and regulations regarding well sealing, contact the Minnesota Department of Health’s Well Management Section at (651) 201-4600. MDH also has a web page with information at:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/abandwel.html>

Abandoned Well Q & A:

What is an abandoned well?

Unused wells, sometimes referred to as “abandoned wells,” are simply those wells that are no longer in use or that have broken equipment that cannot be repaired. Either way, these wells are no longer used for their intended purpose of providing a water supply. In the metro area, this is often because the home has been connected to a municipal water supply.

Why are abandoned wells a problem?

Abandoned wells that have not been properly sealed are potential sources of contamination to groundwater and can affect nearby drinking water wells. Abandoned wells act as direct pathways that allow contaminants or poor-quality water to move from the land surface and/or near-surface water-bearing layers to lower water-bearing layers. In the metro area, deeper groundwater resources are used by all cities for some or all of their drinking water (including St. Paul). Abandoned wells can also be a safety hazard.