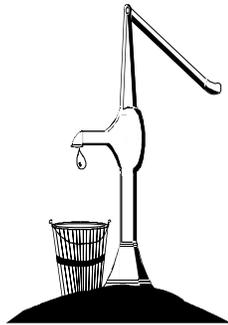


# Drinking Water Wells in Montana



## CONTACTS *And* REFERENCES

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Joe Meek, Source Water Protection Program Manager



This booklet was compiled by the Source Water Protection Program at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

It is intended to help you find the appropriate contact for any well questions or problems you have, whether they be related to domestic wells (homeowner type wells) or public water system wells.

A *Water Well Contact Quick List* can be found on page 7.

A set of definitions are located inside the back cover.

# Drinking Water Wells in Montana

## Water Rights

If you intend to use more than 35 gpm, you need to make application for a Beneficial Water Use Permit to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) before the well is constructed. If you intend to use less than 35 gpm, you need to file a Notice of Completion of Groundwater Development with DNRC within 60 days of well completion. Permit applications and other information can be obtained from the DNRC Water Resources Field Office in your area:

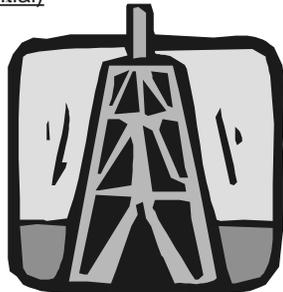
Billings	247-4415
Helena	444-6999
Bozeman	586-3136
Kalispell	752-2288
Glasgow	228-2561
Lewistown	538-7459
Havre	265-5516
Missoula	721-4284

## Well Construction

### Non-public wells (domestic or residential)

For specific questions about regulations concerning well drillers or well construction, contact the regional DNRC office listed above or the Board of Water Well Contractors at (406) 444-6643.

For general well construction questions contact registered well drillers or pump installers (*look in the yellow pages under "Water*



*Well Drilling and Service"*). Domestic wells are not directly regulated after construction nor are they routinely inspected by any governmental agency. If you have a general question about domestic wells, contact the county sanitarian (*listed under county government listings in the phone book*).

### Public Water Supply (PWS) Wells

Proposed wells for PWSs must meet well construction standards established by the Board of Water Well Contractors and standards established pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act. For more information contact the PWS Program at DEQ:

Helena office	(406) 444-4400
Billings office	(406) 247-4445
Kalispell office	(406) 755-8985

## Source Water Protection or Well Improvements

### Non-public Wells (domestic/residential)

For help identifying contaminants in your well water contact the county sanitarian (*under county government listings in the phone book*). For questions about well improvements or modifications contact well drillers and pump installers (*look in the yellow pages under "Water Well Drilling and Service"*). The Montana State University (MSU) Extension Service also can provide information about domestic wells, well protection and water treatment devices. Ask the local extension service office (*under county government listings in phone book*) for EB102. You can also find related information on the Internet at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/wqinfo/swp/links.asp>.

### Public Water Supply Wells

For general information about well modifications or improvements contact the PWS Program at DEQ:

Helena office	(406) 444-4400
Billings office	(406) 247-4445
Kalispell Office	(406) 755-8985

For information about developing a source water protection plan, contact the Source Water Protection Program at DEQ (406) 444-6697.

*If a spill or leak threatens your well (public or private) contact the Montana 24-hour Spill Hotline at (406) 841-3911. If you have a concern about any activity that may affect surface or groundwater quality, contact the DEQ Enforcement Division at (406) 444-0379, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.*

## Well Logs

### Non-public Wells (domestic/residential)

Well logs for completed wells must be filed with the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) by the driller within 60 days of completion. Contact GWIC at (406) 496-4336 to find a well log. Well logs are used by well owners, home buyers, the public and agencies to determine local conditions, well location and other purposes. Please note that filing a well log is not the same as filing for a water right. Water rights records can be accessed via DNRCs website at "<http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/wrd/home.htm>." Well logs can be accessed via MBMGs website at "<http://mbmggwic.mtech.edu>."

### Public Water Supply Wells

In addition to the sources cited above, you may also contact the Source Water Protection Program at DEQ, (406) 444-6697 to assist you in obtaining well logs.

## Well Abandonment

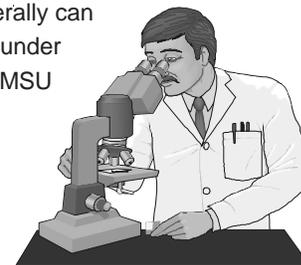
For information about state requirements for properly abandoning a well, contact the regional DNRC office listed on page 1 or the Board of Water Well contractors at (406) 444-6643. For general information, or to find a professional capable of properly abandoning a well, look in the yellow pages under "Well Drilling." Cost-sharing may be available to abandon unused water well through the USDA Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) in most counties. Eligibility is limited to agricultural producers with drilled or hand-dug

wells. Check your local Natural Resource Conservation Service office or the local Conservation District.

## Water Testing

### Non-public wells (domestic/residential)

The Montana Public Health Lab and numerous private laboratories can analyze water samples for bacteria and nitrate which are the most commonly tested parameters in domestic drinking water supplies. Water tests can also be performed for many other contaminants. The state lab or county sanitarian generally can advise you on what to analyze for under your specific conditions. Also, the MSU Extension Service can provide information about common water quality problems and recommended analysis. Ask the local extension service office (*under county government listings in the phone book*) for Extension Bulletin #48 (*also called EB48*).



Sample bottles and instructions are available from the Montana Public Health Lab. Call (406) 444-2642 between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. A nitrate test costs around \$15.00 - \$20.00; bacteria tests cost \$15.00 - \$20.00. For private laboratories look in the yellow pages under "Laboratories -Testing."

### Public Water Supply Wells

Public water supplies must meet established drinking water quality standards as documented by routine sample analysis. Contact the Public Water Supply Program at DEQ (406) 444-4400 for specific information. Public water supplies must use laboratories certified by the state. A list of certified laboratories is available from the Montana Public Health Lab (406) 444-2642. You can access specific information about water quality at your PWS via EPAs webpage "[http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/sdwis/sdwis\\_ov.html](http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/sdwis/sdwis_ov.html)."

## Interpreting

### Well Water Test Results

#### Non-public wells (domestic/residential)

Domestic well owners can refer to EB48 available from your local extension office or contact the county Sanitarian for assistance.

#### Public Water Supply Wells

Public water systems should contact the Field Services Section at DEQ, (406) 444-4400 for assistance.

### Drinking Water Quality Standards and Health Effects

#### Non-public Wells (domestic/residential)

Established drinking water standards apply to water supplied by a PWS. These standards may be considered relative to a domestic well for comparison, however, there are no water quality standards or minimum water quality requirements applicable to private wells.

Domestic well owners may contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safe-Drinking Water Hotline. Call toll free (800) 426-4791 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or e-mail an information request to [hotline-sdwa@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:hotline-sdwa@epamail.epa.gov) or visit EPA's "Private Wells" page on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/booklet/>



#### Public Water Supply Wells

For questions about water quality standards or health effects, contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safe-Drinking Water Hotline. Call toll free (800) 426-4791 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time or the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Community Services Bureau, Public Water Supply Section, (406) 444-4071. You can also find fact sheets on specific contaminants at EPA's Internet site at "<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/mcl.html>."

## Water Treatment Devices

#### Non-public Wells (domestic/residential)

The MSU Extension Service publication entitled "Household Drinking Water Protection and Treatment" can answer many questions concerning treatment devices and their applicability to specific domestic water quality problems. Ask the local extension service office (*under county government listings in the phone book*) for Extension Bulletin #102 (EB102).

#### Public Water Supply Wells

All modifications to a PWS must be reviewed and approved prior to installation. Before installing any treatment device on a public water supply or making any other modifications contact DEQ, Public Water Supply Section at (406) 444-4400.



## Water Well Contact Quick List

NAME	PHONE NUMBER	REMARKS
County sanitarian	see <i>County Government</i> listings in phone book	for most private well questions or for help in deciding who to call for assistance
Local DNRC office	see page 1 and 3	for water rights questions or well logs
GWIC	(406) 496-4336	for water well logs
Tom Gignoux Board of Water Well Contractors	(406) 444-6643	for well construction standards or questions about the regulation of well drillers
Local driller	see <i>Well Drilling and Service</i> <i>listings in phone book</i>	well construction or pump questions for private wells
DEQ PWS Program	(406) 444-4400 - Helena (406) 247-4445 - Billings	for questions about Public Water Systems
DEQ SWP Section	(406) 444-6697	for questions about Source Water Protection for PWSs
Public Health Lab	(406) 444-2642	for questions about water sample analysis
DES 24 hour Spill Hotline	(406) 841-3911	to report spills that threaten surface or groundwater

*The information on this sheet was compiled by the Montana Source Water Protection Program and may be subject to change. If you have additional questions or need further assistance contact Joe Meek at (406) 444-4806 or e-mail at [jmeek@state.mt.us](mailto:jmeek@state.mt.us).*

## Definitions

**Contamination** generally means an alteration of water such that it cannot be put to some intended use.

**Domestic/Residential Well** means a well that serves a home or residential dwelling that is connected to a system serving less than 25 persons and has fewer than 15 service connections.

**MCL** means the maximum contaminant level or concentration that is allowed in water provided through a public water system.

**Multiple Family Water Supply Well** means a well that serves a non-public system with 3 to 9 living units.

**Public Water Supply Well** means a well connected to a system that provides water for human consumption that has at least 15 service connections or that regularly serves at least 25 persons per day for at least 60 days in a calendar year.

**Water Rights** authorize a person to utilize a specific amount of water for a beneficial use over a period of time.

**Well Logs** are completed by well drillers and describe the well construction, quantity of water produced, and subsurface conditions encountered during construction.