

# Need a Water Well Drilled or Repaired?



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

## Water Well Consumer Protection Guide

### Protecting the Consumer

Many New Yorkers rely on wells for drinking water. If you need to have a new water well drilled or an existing well repaired, you should know how consumers are protected under New York State Environmental Conservation Law ECL §15-1525.

### The law requires that...

- All water well contractors register with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) every year.
- Water wells be constructed and drilled in accordance with NYS Department of Health rules and regulations (see "For More Information").
- The person supervising the work has to be certified. Certification is through the National Groundwater Association (NGWA). Be sure to ask about certification before you sign the contract.
- Water well contractors are required to submit a well completion report to you, the consumer, and to DEC for each new well they drill.

### What the Law Covers

- Water well construction and reconstruction
- Repairs that require opening or creating an opening into a water well
- Installation or repair of pitless adapters or pumps installed within water wells

### What the Law Does Not Cover

- Pipes, pumps, or treatment equipment outside the well (within a dwelling or leading to a well)

NYS General Business Law 36A requires a written contract for home improvement services and materials that exceed \$500. For more information on home improvement contracts, contact the New York State Attorney General's office at [www.ag.ny.gov](http://www.ag.ny.gov)



### Consumer Protection Checklist

- Contact local health and building code officials for local requirements.
- Obtain more than one estimate.
- Ask contractors for references and contact them.
- Use DEC's online search at [www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov) to see if your contractor is registered and to get information about nearby wells.
- Make sure the contractors you consider adhere to Department of Health well construction standards.
- Verify that your contractor is properly insured.
- Get a written contract. If you have special concerns, include them in the contract.
- Get your well water tested.
- Talk to neighbors about their wells (location, depth, contractor).



## Frequently Asked Questions

**How can I find out if my contractor is registered?**

**A:** Use DEC's [registered water well contractor search tool](#).

**How deep should my well be drilled?**

**A:** There is not standard well depth. Well depth depends on many factors, such as local geology, natural water quality, health standards, yield and storage needs, drilling equipment capabilities, and cost. Discuss these with prospective contractors.

**Does DEC charge a fee to the contractor or consumer to submit a well completion report for each well?**

**A:** No, DEC does not charge a fee to report a well.

**Should I receive a copy of the DEC Well Completion Report?**

**A:** Yes, the law requires the water well driller to provide a copy to the well owner.

**Are pump contractors required to be registered and certified?**

**A:** Yes, if the contractor is involved with opening the well.

**Can I drill my own well?**

**A:** New York State Building Code requires all wells to be drilled by a registered contractor.

**Do I need a permit to drill my water well?**

**A:** A DEC permit is not required except for Long Island water wells that produce more than 45 gallons per minute, and geothermal wells more than 500 feet deep. However, a local permit is needed in some counties.

**Who is exempt from this law?**

**A:** Public corporations, political sub-divisions and government agencies are exempt.



## Find Data Online

- To find a registered water well contractor, use DEC's [registered water well contractor search tool](#).
- To find local water well information (such as depth and yield of nearby wells) view DEC's online [water well completion report data](#). Several options are available to obtain water well data online.

## For More Information

- NYS Department of Health: [Private Water Wells](#)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: [Water Topics](#)
- U.S. Geological Survey: [Groundwater Wells](#)
- National Ground Water Association: <http://www.ngwa.org> and [www.wellowner.org](http://www.wellowner.org)
- Water Systems Council: [Water Well Help for Well Owners](#)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Water Well Program

Division of Water

### New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

(Toll Free) 877-472-2619

[nyswaterwells@dec.ny.gov](mailto:nyswaterwells@dec.ny.gov)

[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

