



County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health

Land and Water Quality Division

Private Water Well Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When does a water well permit need to be obtained?

A: Whenever a water well is proposed to be constructed, modified, reconstructed (i.e. deepened) or destroyed, a permit is required.

Q: What authority does DEH have to require and issue water well permits?

A: San Diego County Code, Sections 67.401 through 67.424 provide the regulatory authority to DEH to require and issue water well permits. In addition, Section 67.421 adopts standards from Bulletin 74-90 for the construction, repair, reconstruction or destruction of wells.

Q: Are there standards for the construction and maintenance of water wells?

A: Yes, San Diego County Code Section 67.421 adopts standards from Bulletin 74-90 for the construction, repair, reconstruction or destruction of wells. Additional requirements are specified in the subsequent Section, 67.422.

Q: What general types of information does DEH need in order to issue a water well permit?

A: The Water well permit application is a simple form that requires general information about the property owner and well contractor/driller and specific information about the well location and proposed construction details. In addition, the applicant must attach a scaled map of the well location and other items of interest in the vicinity such as property lines, water bodies, roads, septic systems, and other items of interest as requested on the application. Only California licensed well drilling contractors with a valid C-57 may submit well permit applications.

Q: What types of things would cause a water well permit application to be denied or keep a property owner from installing a well on their property?

A: A permit to install a well in the County of San Diego will be issued by DEH when a properly completed well permit application has been reviewed and approved by DEH staff. Notwithstanding errors in the application, if the proposed well site meets specific criteria including required setbacks from potential sources of contamination (i.e: septic systems) both on and off the property, the well permit will generally be approved.

Q: Does DEH have the authority to limit, restrict, or deny a property owner from installing a well on their property?

A: Generally no, provided the proposed well meets necessary requirements and State regulations. However, while not common, there are site specific restrictions for some properties that could prevent DEH from issuing a well permit, such as when installing a well could cause the spread of contaminants to uncontaminated water zones.

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Q: Does DEH monitor groundwater levels or water well use for private wells?

A: No.

Q: Can DEH limit the amount of water extracted from private wells?

A: No.



Q: The Governor of California has issued an Executive Order due to the ongoing drought in California. Will this or other drought related legislation or regulations affect a property owner's ability to install and operate a well on their property?

A: At this time there is no indication that the drought will cause DEH or State water well requirements to change.

Q: What resources are available to private well owners that are having issues associated with the drought?

A: There are six government programs which may be able to provide assistance as follows:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development Section 502: Rural Housing Direct Loan Program (<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-direct-home-loans>).
- USDA Rural Development Section 504: Rural Development, Rural Repair, and Rehabilitation Loan and Grant Program (http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/hsf_sfh.html).
 - Basic eligibility: <http://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do>
 - Download more information about USDA's Drought Assistance at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/SupportDocuments/CA-DroughtAssistance.pdf>
- USDA Household Water Well Systems (<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/household-water-well-system-grants>)
- USDA Housing Preservation Grants to rehabilitate a substandard housing to a safe and decent sanitary condition. Water wells are eligible for this program. (<http://www.rcac.org/home>)
 - Loan flyer (<http://www.rcac.org/assets/loan%20fund/HWW-flyer-app10-9-14.pdf>)
- California Department of Housing and Community Development, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Housing Rehabilitation Funds. Whether the residence is in an incorporated city or an unincorporated area, contact the respective city or county housing department and ask about the availability of "CDBG housing rehabilitation" funding.
 - Contact Susan.Naramore@hcd.ca.gov for more information about CDBG funding.
- California Department of Housing and Community Development – CalHome. Contact Raymond.Victor@hcd.ca.gov for more information about CalHome or visit: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/drought/housing-drought-resources.html>

Q: Who do I report drought related well issues to?

A: The County of San Diego, Office of Emergency Services (OES) is collecting information on drought related well issues in the County. To report well issues related to the drought please call OES at 858-565-3490. OES may also have additional information on drought related resources available to private well owners.