

Wells & Water information

Online

For information on **wells or private drinking water**, visit the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Well Management Section website at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells

For a complete MDH **well owner's guide**: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/construction/handbook.pdf

Email

Email the section directly at: health.wells@state.mn.us

Who to Call

For an **area well specialist**, contact the MDH office nearest you.

MDH offices

★ MAIN OFFICE
651-201-4600
800-383-9808
625 North Robert Street
P. O. Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

1 BEMIDJI
218-308-2100
705 Fifth Street Northwest
Bemidji, MN 56601

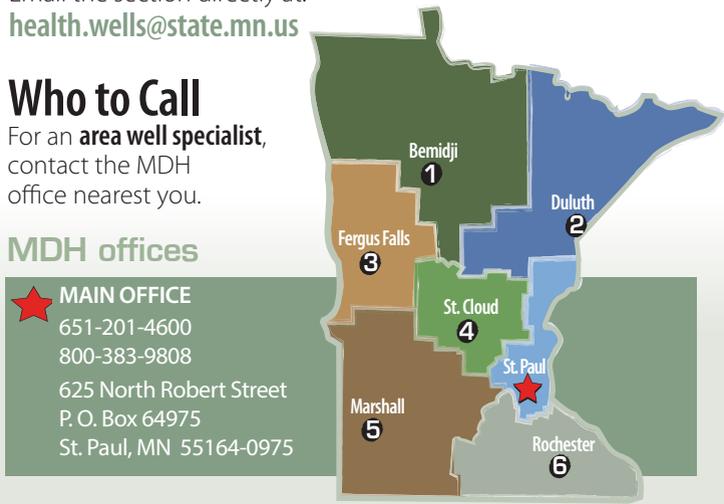
2 DULUTH
218-302-6166
Duluth Technology Village
11 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802

3 FERGUS FALLS
218-332-5150
1505 Pebble Lake Road
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

4 ST. CLOUD
320-223-7300
3333 West Division Street
St. Cloud, MN 56301

5 MARSHALL
507-476-4220
1400 East Lyon Street
Marshall, MN 56258

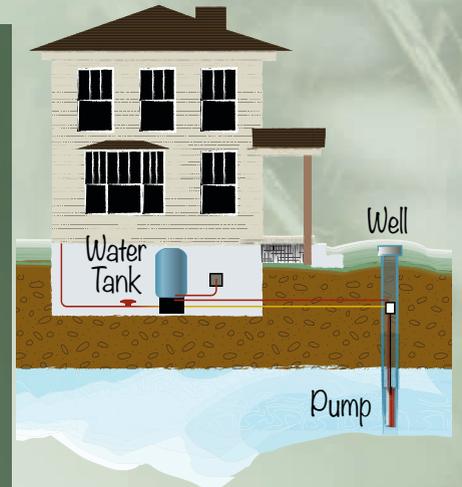
6 ROCHESTER
507-206-2700
18 Wood Lake Drive Southeast
Rochester, MN 55904



Owner's Guide To Wells



When a well is properly located, constructed, and maintained it can provide a reliable safe source for drinking, food preparation, irrigation, or for any purpose be it for domestic, agricultural, or commercial uses.



Over a million Minnesotans rely on a private well to supply their water.



Resources for Minnesota well owners

If You Hire a Contractor

Contractors installing a new well, performing work on an existing well, or sealing an old well must be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Licensed well contractors know the regulations and will complete the required paperwork, and properly locate, construct, test, or seal your well. Only a licensed well contractor can seal an unused well.

For a list of MDH licensed well contractors: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/lwc

If You Construct Your Own Well

You may construct your own well on property you own or lease. The well can only be used to supply water to your personal residence or for farming or other agricultural purposes. Be advised that the well must still be constructed according to Minnesota regulations and the required paperwork must be completed and submitted to MDH.

More on installing a well, required paperwork, fee, and water testing: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/construction/construct.html

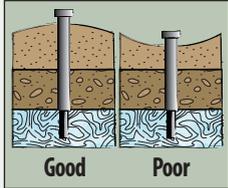
To request this document in another format, call 651-201-4600. [origs/brochures/owners guide to wells](http://origs/brochures/owners%20guide%20to%20wells) 8/12/2014
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Constructing and maintaining a safe well involves a partnership between the owner and the well contractor. Both have specific responsibilities and each needs to be involved in the process.

Responsibilities of the well CONTRACTOR

Assure Proper Location



Assuring your new well is located on high ground with good drainage and a sufficient distance from sources of contamination. www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/construction/isolate.html

Compliant Construction Methods

Using approved products and materials per MDH regulations. www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/twinfo

Disinfect the Well

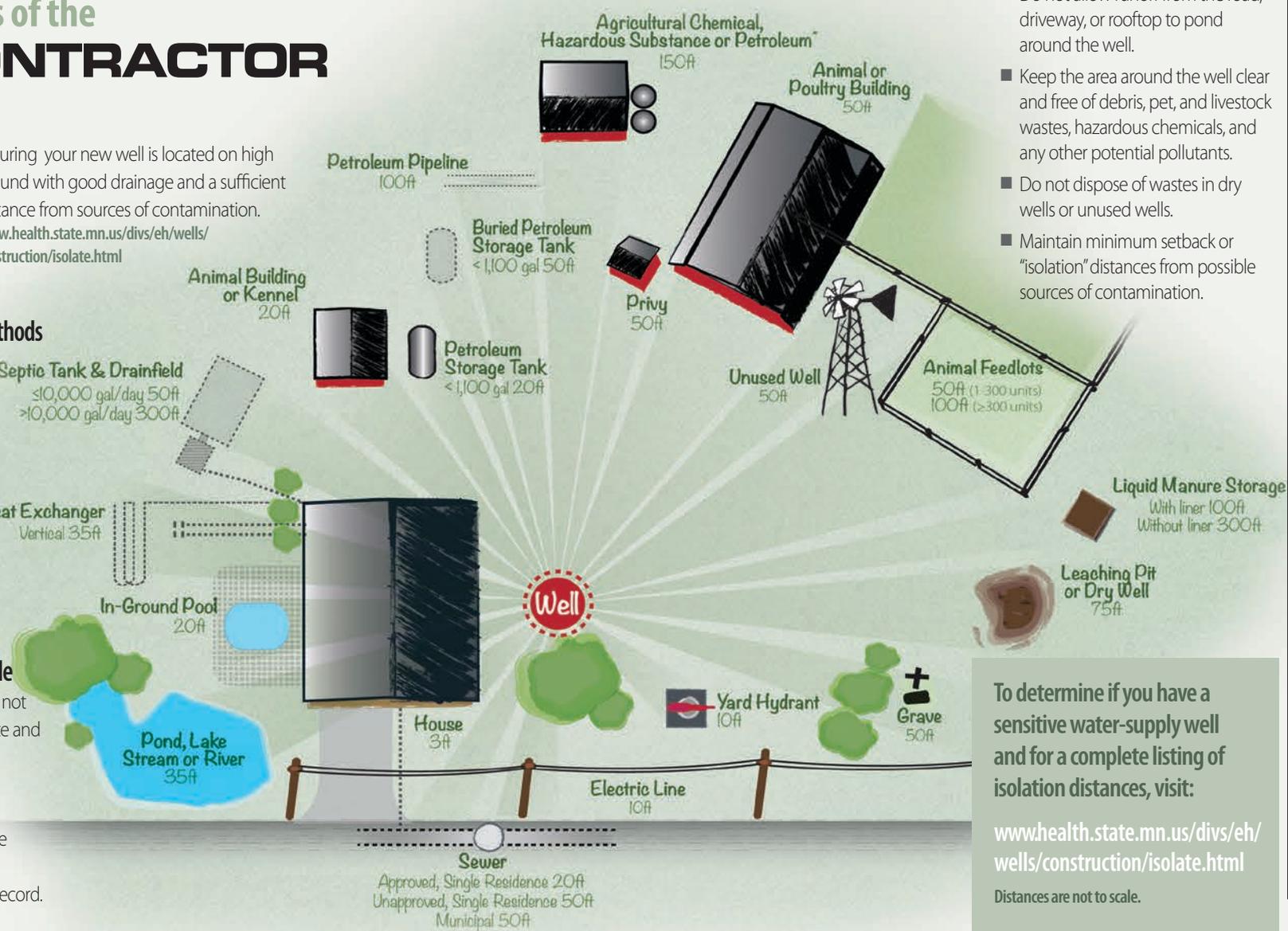
Proper disinfection will eliminate harmful bacteria from the water. www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/waterquality/disinfection.pdf

Collect & Test a Water Sample

Ensures that harmful bacteria is not present and detects if any nitrate and arsenic is present in the water.

Test Results & Records

Providing you with a copy of the water sample results and the Well and Boring Construction Record.



To determine if you have a sensitive water-supply well and for a complete listing of isolation distances, visit: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/construction/isolate.html
Distances are not to scale.

Responsibilities of the well OWNER

Stop Contaminants

Keep Your Water Safe

- Keep the top of your well at least 1 foot above the ground.
- Do not allow runoff from the road, driveway, or rooftop to pond around the well.
- Keep the area around the well clear and free of debris, pet, and livestock wastes, hazardous chemicals, and any other potential pollutants.
- Do not dispose of wastes in dry wells or unused wells.
- Maintain minimum setback or "isolation" distances from possible sources of contamination.

Protect the Well



Routinely Inspect Your Well

- Visually inspect the well for problems such as cracks, corrosion, loose wires, settling, or well casing damage.
- Ensure the well cap is securely attached to the well casing, not broken or missing, and connections to the well are watertight.
- Hire a licensed well contractor to inspect your well for defects every 10-15 years.



Protect the Wellhead

- Be careful not to bump the well with lawn mowers, snowplows, or other equipment so as not to damage the wellhead or your water distribution line.
- Do not pile snow, leaves, or other materials around your well.
- Mark the well location with a highly visible flag during winter.
- Limit fertilizer and pesticide use in vicinity of your well.



After a Flood

- Do not drink the water from the well or use it for washing if flood waters come near or over your well.
- Only drink or use water after it is properly disinfected and tested.
- For additional information on what to do before and after flooding occurs, visit MDH's website at: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/emergency/natural/floods.



Seal Unused Wells

Unused wells are a potential source of groundwater contamination as well as a safety hazard on your property. Remember, only a licensed well contractor can seal wells. For additional information on how to seal an unused well, visit: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/sealing.

Water Testing

After a New Well is Installed

You should not use the water from the well for drinking and cooking until you receive satisfactory water sample results from the contractor or laboratory.

Continue Testing Your Water

Your drinking water should be tested any time your well system is serviced, or whenever you NOTICE A CHANGE in taste, color, or odor. In addition regular testing should be conducted as shown.

Test For	Annually	Every 2 Years	Once
Total Coliform Bacteria	✓		
Nitrate*	✓	✓	
Arsenic			✓
Lead			✓

* Test annually or every two years and always test before giving to an infant.

Depending on where you live and the characteristics of your well MDH recommends testing for other potential contaminants. For more complete information on testing, visit: www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/waterquality.

Keep Accurate Records

- Keep all well records. Records may pertain to maintenance, repairs, disinfection, sediment removal, etc.
- Keep all records pertaining to water sampling and their test results.