

SECTION 13: PRIVATE & AGRICULTURAL WELLS

13.10: Private wells used either for agricultural or drinking water purposes may not be drilled or otherwise installed without a permit from the Board of Health.[July 1, 2009]

13.11: All new agricultural and drinking water wells shall be tested initially by a certified laboratory for total coli form, potability, and volatile organic compounds (voc's), and then retested every ten (10) years. If the homeowner detects an unpleasant or unnatural taste or odor, the well should be tested immediately. [July 1, 2009]

13.12: Prior to or simultaneous with a transfer of real property to someone other than an immediate family member, the seller shall have any well used for drinking water purposes tested by a certified laboratory for total coliform, potability and volatile organic compounds. [July 1, 2009]

13.13: Immediate family members and/or relationships are defined as follows: between current spouses, between parents and their children, full siblings and where the grantor transfers the real property to be held in a revocable or irrevocable trust, where at least one of the designed beneficiaries is of the full degree of relationship to the grantor (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection- Septic Systems/Title V: Regulations Policy- Technical Guidelines on Residential Property Transfers Between Family Members.) [July 1, 2009]

DECOMMISSIONING REQUIREMENTS:

Abandoned wells, test holes, and borings shall be decommissioned so as to prevent the well, including the annular space outside the casing, from being a channel allowing the vertical movement of water.

The owner of the private well shall decommission the well if the well meets any of the following criteria:

- 1) construction of the well is terminated prior to completion of the well;
- 2) the well owner notifies the Board that the use of the well is to be permanently discontinued;
- 3) the well has been out of service for at least three years;
- 4) the well is a potential hazard to public health or safety and the situation cannot be corrected;
- 5) the well is in such a state of disrepair that its continued use is impractical; and
- 6) the well has the potential for transmitting contaminants from the land surface into an aquifer or from one aquifer to another and the situation cannot be corrected.

The property owner shall be responsible for insuring that all abandoned wells and test holes or borings associated with private well installation are properly plugged. Only registered well drillers may plug abandoned wells, test holes and borings.

In the case of new well construction, all test holes and boring shall be plugged before the well driller completes work at the site.

Abandoned wells or borings shall be completely filled with a grout which cures with a final permeability of less than 1×10^{-7} cm/sec. Wells shall be plugged with neat cement grout, sand cement grout, concrete, or bentonite grout.

Regardless of the type used, the grout:

- 1) shall be sufficiently fluid so that it can be applied through a tremie pipe from the bottom of the well upward
- 2) shall remain as a homogeneous fluid when applied to the subsurface rather than disaggregating by gravity into a two phase substance
- 3) shall be resistant to chemical or physical deterioration
- 4) shall not leach chemicals, either organic or inorganic, that will adversely affect the quality of the groundwater where it is applied

The plugging materials shall be introduced at the bottom of the well or boring and placed progressively upward to a level approximately four (4) feet below the ground surface. Sealing materials shall never be poured from the land surface into the well, borehole, or annular space being sealed.

The contractor shall emplace the surface seal no sooner than 24 hours after the well or boring has been plugged. Before the surface seal is placed, casing remaining in the hole shall be at least six inches thick and shall be at least two feet greater in diameter than the well casing or borehole wall.

[Optional: The DEP Private Well Guidelines, section entitled “Decommissioning Abandoned Wells, Test Holes, and Dry or Inadequate Borings,” contains a more comprehensive discussion of plugging procedures and other aspects of decommissioning and contains specific recommendations]. [July 1, 2009]

