

Construction



Q: *Is casing necessary for a new well installation?*

A: It is an MCHD requirement. Casing is used to keep the well from collapsing.

Q: *How deep should I drill my well?*

A: On average, a well is drilled between 80 and 200 feet deep depending on site conditions.

Q: *How long does a submersible pump last?*

A: Submersible pumps last an average of 10 to 15 years.

Q: *What are a few signs that my well may be running dry?*

A: The two (2) most common signs are reduced water pressure and the presence of sediment creating a discoloration of the water.

Q: *If my current well runs dry, must I have an entire new well dug or can I deepen the existing well?*

A: Either solution is acceptable. MCHD recommends contacting a well driller.

Q: *Why does MCHD require that the well casing be grouted?*

A: Grout is pumped around the casing to help prevent surface water infiltration and guard against future contamination.

Q: *How close can a septic system be to a new well?*

A: A new well must be installed a minimum of 50 feet to any septic tanks and 100 feet to any septic drain field.

Water Quality Concerns, Testing and Treatment

Q: *Where do I go to test my well water?*

A: A water testing laboratory that is certified by PADEP for drinking water parameters. A lab list is available upon request.



Q: *How often should I test my well?*

A: MCHD recommends conducting an annual test for total coliform bacteria. In addition, MCHD advises testing for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) every 3-5 years.

Q: *What other water quality tests are recommended by MCHD?*

A: MCHD also recommends testing your water for nitrates, chlorides, total dissolved solids, pH, iron and manganese.

Q: *What water quality parameters are required to be tested when I buy/sell a home?*

A: The parameters depend on requirements set by each mortgage company. At a minimum, MCHD recommends testing for total coliform, VOCs and nitrates.

Q: *If testing proves that my existing well water is contaminated, am I obligated by MCHD to correct the problem? Will I be evicted from my home if I choose not to correct it?*

A: No. Except for MCHD permitted wells and rental properties, MCHD can only offer recommendations for owner occupied homes.

Q: *What types of contaminants can be treated?*

A: All contaminants can be treated with the appropriate device. MCHD recommends contacting a water quality professional for specific treatment options.

Q: *Can water filters remove bacteria from my well?*

A: No, water filters are used for removing suspended solids or sediment not bacteria.

Q: *What type of treatment device can I install if coliform bacteria is detected in my water?*

A: A chlorination system, ultra-violet (UV) light unit or other type of disinfection unit may be used to kill bacteria. Be advised the well should be dosed with a diluted chlorine solution and tested again prior to purchasing any disinfection unit.

Q: *Is there an MCHD requirement for the yield of my well?*

A: MCHD has no requirements. However, any yield under four (4) gallons per minute (gpm) is considered low. MCHD recommends well owners use good water conservation practices.

Q: *Do I need to abandon my old well if a replacement well is constructed on the property?*

A: No, you are not required to abandon the well unless it is part of the permit agreement. However, if you choose to abandon the well, you must adhere to state procedures and complete an abandonment form.

**PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY.
GET YOUR WATER TESTED TODAY!**

MCHD Well Permitting

Q: *Do I need a permit to drill a new well?*

A: Yes. As of February 1, 1997, all new homeowner drinking water wells, replacement wells or modifications to existing wells must be permitted by the Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD).



Q: *Do I need a permit to deepen my well?*

A: Yes. Any modification to your well, with the exception of replacing the pump, must be permitted by MCHD.

Q: *Is a permit required to abandon a well?*

A: No. However, a well abandonment form needs to be completed and submitted to MCHD. Furthermore, the well must be abandoned according to state procedures.

Q: *How long is my permit valid?*

A: A permit for an individual well is valid for three (3) years. If the well has not been installed within three (3) years a new permit must be obtained from MCHD.

Q: *Are all individual water wells regulated in the County?*

A: No. The regulations in the Montgomery County Public Health Code only pertain to new private drinking water wells.

Q: *What water quality tests are required by MCHD for a new well?*

A: MCHD requires new wells be analyzed for total coliform bacteria, pH, nitrates and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

For More Information

Pennsylvania Department of
Environmental Protection
www.dep.state.pa.us
1-484-250-5900



Federal Bureau of
Environmental Protection
www.epa.gov
1-800-438-2474



Pennsylvania American Water
Works Association
www.paawwa.org
1-717-774-8870



American Ground Water Trust
www.agwt.org
1-603-228-5444



Water Quality Association
www.wqa.org
1-630-505-0160

Montgomery County Health Department
Division of Water Quality Management
Human Services Center
1430 DeKalb Street
P. O. Box 311
Norristown, PA 19404-0311
610-278-5117

www.health.montcopa.org



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Montgomery County Health Department

Frequently Asked Questions about Well Water



**WHAT EVERY
HOMEOWNER SHOULD
KNOW ABOUT THEIR
WELL WATER**