

# Questions?

Use the resources below or contact the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

## Resources

**Well Owner's Handbook: A Consumer's Guide to Water Wells in Minnesota (PDF)**

([www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/wells/construction/handbook.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/wells/construction/handbook.pdf))

**Flood Precautions For Private Water Wells**

([www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/natural/floodprecautions.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/natural/floodprecautions.html))

**Licensed Well and Boring Contractor Directory**

([www.health.state.mn.us/lwcsearch](http://www.health.state.mn.us/lwcsearch))

**Sealing of Wells and Borings**

([www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/sealing](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/sealing))

**Search for Accredited Laboratories**

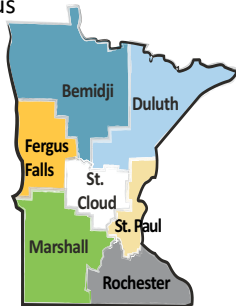
([www.health.state.mn.us/labsearch](http://www.health.state.mn.us/labsearch))

**Water Quality and Testing**

([www.health.state.mn.us/wellwater](http://www.health.state.mn.us/wellwater))

## MDH Offices

625 Robert Street North  
P.O. Box 64975  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
651-201-4600 or 800-383-9808  
[health.privatewells@state.mn.us](mailto:health.privatewells@state.mn.us)  
[www.health.state.mn.us/wells](http://www.health.state.mn.us/wells)



### District office locations:

Bemidji  
Duluth  
Fergus Falls  
Marshall  
Rochester  
Saint Cloud

For up to date address and contact information please visit:  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/about/locations/index.html>

To obtain this information in a different format  
call 651-201-4600. Printed on recycled paper.

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# Owner's Guide to Wells



A well that is properly **located, constructed, maintained, and tested** can provide a reliable, safe drinking water and serve many household agricultural, and commercial purposes.

**You and your licensed well contractor have important roles in keeping your well safe.** A safe well helps keep your family healthy and protects Minnesota's groundwater. Remember your role by remembering TIPS. →

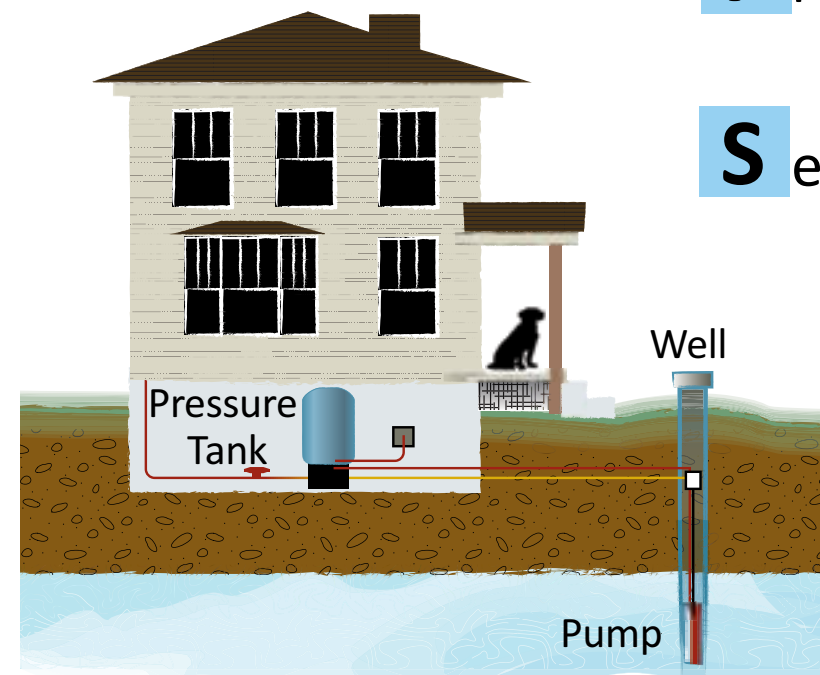
**Keep all well records** related to well construction, maintenance, repairs, disinfection, sediment removal, and testing.

**T**est your water.

**I**nspect your well.

**P**rotect your well.

**S**eal unused wells.



**1.2 million Minnesotans get their drinking water from a private well.**

# Your Licensed Well Contractor's Responsibilities

When Constructing Your New Well\*

## Ensures proper well location.

- Correct distance from contamination sources (see image below).
- Good drainage away from the well.
- Highest practical site on the property.

## Complies with MDH regulations

by using approved methods, products, and materials.

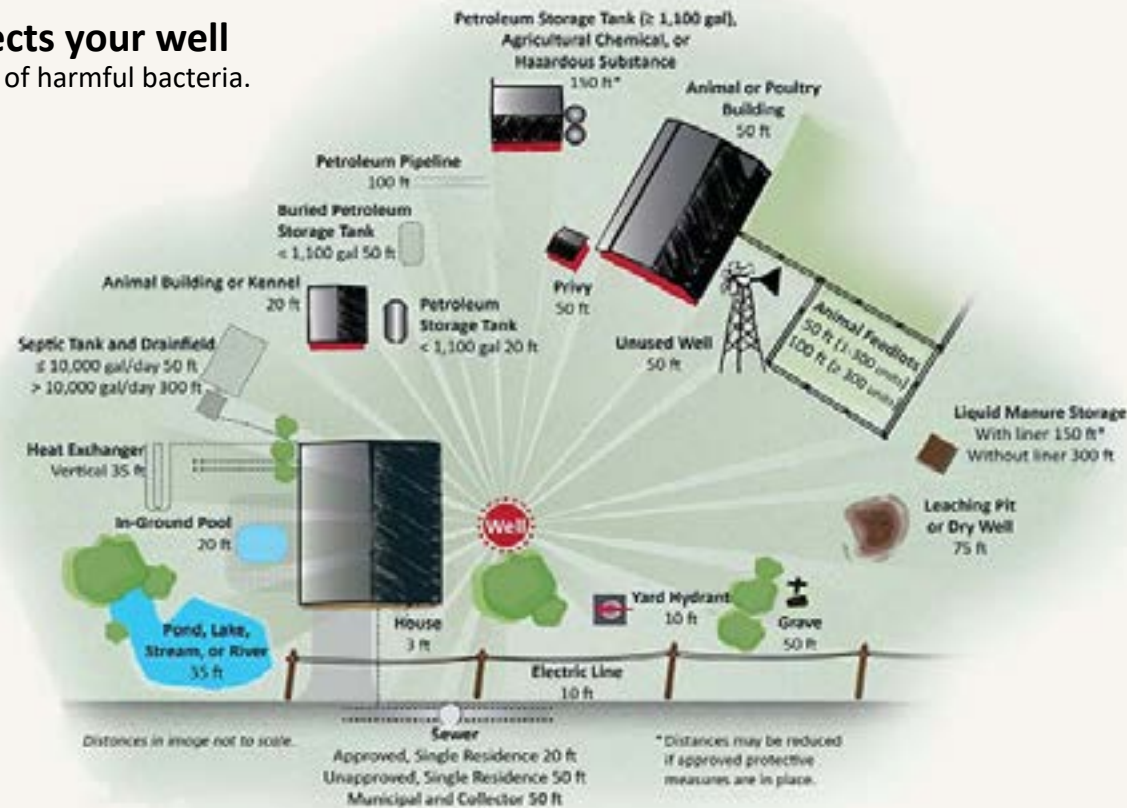
## Disinfects your well

to get rid of harmful bacteria.

## Collects an initial water sample

after construction is finished to test for coliform bacteria, nitrate, and arsenic before you start using your well water for drinking or cooking.

**Gives you a copy** of the water test results and the Well and Boring Construction Record, also known as a well log.



**Image above: Partial list of minimum isolation distances.**

Isolation distances keep pollutants away from your well to protect your water. Some sensitive wells will require greater isolation distances. For a complete list of isolation distances, see [Isolation Distances from a Water-Supply Well](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/construction/isolate.html) (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/wells/construction/isolate.html).

\*Minnesota rules allow you to construct your own well if it serves your personal residence, your farm, or other agricultural purposes and is on property you own or lease. Construction and paperwork must be in accordance with Minnesota regulations. Contact MDH before you begin construction.

# Your Responsibilities

## Test your water.

You are responsible for regularly testing your well water. Both natural sources and human activities can contaminate wells and cause short- or long-term health effects. You cannot taste, see, or smell most contaminants. MDH recommends using an accredited laboratory to test your water. Contact an accredited laboratory to get sample containers and instructions, or ask your county environmental or public health services if they provide well water testing services.



## Inspect your well regularly.

- **Damage:** Any cracks or holes in well casing, corrosion, loose wires, or soil settling?
- **Well cap:** Is it securely attached to the well casing? Is it broken or missing?
- **Connections:** Are the electrical conduit and other connections watertight?



Well in good condition



Damaged well

## Protect your well.

**Do these things:**

- Keep top of well at least 1-foot above ground.
- Keep well area clear of debris.
- Maintain minimum isolation distances from contamination sources (see image to left).
- Mark your well with flags or posts to protect it from being hit by vehicles or machinery.
- Take precautions before and after floods.

**Do NOT do these things:**

- Allow water to pond around your well.
- Use, store, or dispose of potential pollutants (such as animal wastes, fertilizers, pesticides, or hazardous chemicals) near your well.
- Tie animals to your well.
- Dispose of waste in unused wells.

## Seal unused wells.

A well that you no longer use (unused well) can be a pathway for contaminants to get into groundwater and is a safety hazard. Minnesota law holds the property owner responsible for getting unused wells on your property sealed. Only a licensed well contractor can legally seal wells.

**Contact a licensed well contractor if your well needs to be repaired or sealed.**