

What Do I Need to Know About Capping a Water Well for Future Use?

Groundwater has been pumped from water wells for many years. Over time, wells around homes, farms, industrial sites and urban areas may no longer be needed.

Wells that are no longer being used but might be needed in the future can be sealed with a cap that covers the top of the well casing to prevent unauthorized access and contamination of the well. A cap is a temporary groundwater protection solution that allows a well to be used later.

A well can be capped only if it is in good condition and is in use. This is defined as a “non-deteriorated well” by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR). If your well does not have a casing and pump in good condition, it should be properly abandoned. Instructions for doing this can be found in the *Landowners Guide to Plugging Abandoned Water Wells* (publication RG-347).

If you need assistance in determining the condition of your well, contact your local groundwater conservation district, a licensed water well driller in your area, or the Water Well Drillers Program with the TDLR.

The three criteria for capping a well are:

- The cap must fit tightly and be properly sealed to prevent surface pollutants from entering the well.
- The well cap should support 400 pounds to minimize the risk of a person falling into the well.
- To protect children and animals, the cap should not be easily removed by hand that should be heavy enough that it is not easy to lift. If the cap is properly glued or welded there should be no danger of it being accidentally being removed.

More information on capping a water well is available in the publication titled *Capping of Water Wells for Future Use* (AgriLife publication L-5490).

While there is no state requirement for reporting a capped well, if you want to determine whether your well is legally capped, contact your local groundwater conservation district (GCD), a licensed water well driller, or the Water Well Drillers Program of the TDLR.

To prevent groundwater contamination, a wellhead of a capped well should be protected just as if it was a functioning well. Some areas of Texas have programs to help landowners take care of wells. Contact your local GCD and soil and water conservation district to see if such a program is available in your area.

Resources and Useful Links

- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) provides a list of GCD contact information:
<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/groundwater/gcd/gcd-contact-list.pdf>
- TDLR website, <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/index.htm>
- TDLR Water Well Drillers and Pump Installers webpage,
<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/wwd/>
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service website, <https://texaswater.tamu.edu/>
- *Landowner's Guide to Plugging Abandoned Water Wells* (TCEQ publication RG-347),
<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/groundwater/publications/landowners-guide-to-plugging-abandoned-water-wells-rg-347.pdf>
 - *Guía del Terrateniente para Tapar Pozos de Agua Abandonados* (TCEQ RG-347/esp),
<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/groundwater/publications/guia-del-terratieniente-para-tapar-pozos-de-agua-abandonados-rg-347esp.pdf>
- *Capping of Water Wells for Future Use* (AgriLife publication L-5490),
<https://twon.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/06/capping-of-water-wells-for-future-use.pdf>

Other Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To find additional FAQs visit the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee's FAQ webpage at <https://tgpc.texas.gov/frequently-asked-questions-faqs>.