

Groundwater Protection

INFORMATION FOR WELL DRILLERS
AND WELL PUMP INSTALLERS

NEW REQUIREMENTS IN EFFECT

February 29, 2016



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

What is the Groundwater Protection Regulation?

The Groundwater Protection Regulation (GWPR) under the *Water Sustainability Act* requires water wells in B.C. to be properly constructed, maintained, and, at the end of their service, deactivated and decommissioned to protect the quality and safety of our groundwater resources. The regulation came into force on February 29, 2016 and replaces the former Ground Water Protection Regulation under the old *Water Act*.

Changes to the GWPR include new requirements related to new classes of well drillers, well siting, the use of drinking water approved thermoplastic casings and liners, controlling artesian flow, the decommissioning of wells by registered well pump installers, and mandatory reporting requirements.

Why is it important to follow the regulation?

By following the regulation, well drillers and well pump installers will ensure that the construction, maintenance, and decommissioning of a well meets minimum standards to help protect well owners, groundwater users and the health of aquifers.

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations officials are responsible for administering the regulation and may order certain types of work to be done on wells under particular circumstances.

Requirements for becoming a registered well driller or well pump installer

In order to drill particular types of wells or install well pumps in wells in B.C., a driller or pump installer must be registered with the Province. A register of ***registered well drillers*** and ***registered well pump installers*** is maintained by the Province.

To access the register or find out more on how to become registered and *what you need to practice in B.C.*, visit www.gov.bc.ca/water.

New requirements for constructing, altering and decommissioning water supply wells

The person responsible for constructing, altering or decommissioning a water supply well is now legally required to ensure the well meets the minimum requirements in the GWPR. These requirements include, but are not limited to:

- » Siting the well at least 15 metres from existing water supply wells, or according to accepted alternative specifications from a professional.
- » Ensuring that any thermoplastic casing or liner is made of materials approved for drinking water.
- » Construction of new well pits is prohibited unless designed by a professional.
- » Stopping artesian flow or bringing artesian flow under control.
- » Ensuring known aquifers and water-bearing zones are sealed off to prevent mixing of groundwater.
- » When construction, alteration or decommissioning of a well is completed, the well driller or person responsible is required to provide a well report to the well owner and to the Comptroller of Water Rights, where applicable.
- » Mandatory submission of well reports on approved government forms or electronically through [eWELLS](#).

All water supply wells, except for dug wells less than 15 metres deep, must be constructed by or under the direct supervision of a registered well driller or a professional hydrogeologist or geotechnical engineer.

Well decommissioning can be completed by a registered well driller, well pump installer (except for flowing wells) or under the direct supervision of a registered well driller, registered well pump installer or a professional hydrogeologist or geotechnical engineer.

Requirements for installing well pumps

The person responsible for installing a well pump or carrying out related activities is legally required to ensure these activities meet the minimum requirements in the GWPR. These include, but are not limited to:

- » Ensuring the well casing is not damaged or moved during pump installation.
- » Equipping the well with a device to prevent the flow of water back into the well.
- » Using only non-toxic lubricants and solvents when installing, maintaining or repairing a well pump.
- » Repairing or replacing the well's surface seal if it is damaged during pump installation or sealing all visible annular spaces around the well casing if the well does not have a surface seal.
- » Disinfecting the groundwater in the well after installing a permanent well pump or removing a temporary well pump.

Pumps for water supply wells must be installed by or under the direct supervision of a registered well pump installer, registered well driller or a professional hydrogeologist or geotechnical engineer.

For more information:

Questions about the GWPR should be directed to the nearest regional office. Contact information can be found at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/groundwater-wells/regional-groundwater-contacts>.

For more information on the Groundwater Protection Regulation (GWPR) and groundwater in B.C. or to access this brochure online visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/water.

For more on applying for licences and approvals contact FrontCounter BC at **1-877-855-3222** or visit:

www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca.