



WATER PROGRAM FAQs

WELL PERMIT

- 1. Q: How do I obtain a well construction permit?**
A: The Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) issues well construction/destruction permits. Before obtaining a well construction permit, staff from the Department of Environmental Health (Department) will do a site review to ensure the proper location of the proposed well site. Go to the *Well Construction Checklist* for more information.
- 2. Q: Where can I get a copy of the Well Construction Permit Application?**
A: Go to the SCVWD website and print a copy of the application. See the SCVWD website at <http://www.valleywater.org> or go to the *Well Construction Checklist* for a copy of the application.
- 3. Q: Where can I get a copy of the well driller's list?**
A: Call the Department at (408) 918-3400 and ask for a copy of the list or call the SCVWD at (408) 265-2607 x 2717. The well driller's list can also be found on the SCVWD website at <http://www.valleywater.org>
- 4. Q: What is the fee for a well construction review?**
A: See our water program fee schedule.
- 5. Q: How long does it take to get a well permit?**
A: The Department reviews the proposed well location and conducts a site visit in approximately five working days after the application is made. The paperwork is then forwarded onto the SCVWD. The SCVWD takes one to two weeks to issue the permit to the well driller listed on the application. Once the well driller receives the permit, they will contact the applicant to schedule the drilling of the well.

WATER CLEARANCE

- 6. Q: How do I get water clearance?**
A: The Department will issue a water clearance once the well has been drilled and water quality and quantity tests have been performed. For more detailed information, see our *Individual/Shared Water Clearance Checklists*.
- 7. Q: Can I use an existing well on my property for an approved water source?**
A: Only if you can provide information such as a well driller's report documenting that the well has a 50 sanitary seal.
- 8. Q: How long does it take to obtain water clearance from the Department?**

A: Once the complete packet has been submitted it generally takes no more than one week to review, conduct a site visit and condition the water system.

9. Q: Where can I get a copy of a list of private laboratories?

A: Call Department at (408) 918-3400 or see *Private Laboratory List* on our website or the SCVWD website at <http://www.valleywater.org>.

10. Q: What is the fee for a water clearance?

A: See the water program fee schedule for individual/shared well /state small water system clearances on our website.

SEPTIC TANK PERMIT

11. Q: When can I get my septic tank permit?

A: After you have received your water clearance letter and had the District Specialist stamp four copies of your proposed septic system plans. To avoid unnecessary delays, make an appointment with our Land Use Senior before going down to the Current Planning Office (CPO). Our Land Use Senior can be reached at (408) 299-5748. This will expedite the issuance of the septic tank permit. NOTE: The septic permit will be issued only when you are ready to obtain the building permit.

WELL DRILLER'S LOG

12. Q: Why do I need a well driller's log?

A: This is the proof that a minimum 50-foot sanitary seal was installed around the well. This sanitary seal serves to protect the underground water sources from surface contamination.

13. Q: I have an existing well but no well driller's log, whom can I contact to get one?

A: The Department has well log records dating back to 1989. If your well was drilled during this period call us at (408) 918-3411 and give us the address. The SCVWD has well log records dating back to the early 1970's. Call them at (408) 265-2607 x2312 if you believe your well was drilled during that time. They will need the APN number in order to locate the well log. The State Department of Water Resources has well log records that date back to the early 1900's. Call them at (916) 227-7632 if neither the Department nor the SCVWD have the information you need. The State Department of Water Resources will need the Township/Range and Section number of the parcel in order to locate the well log. These numbers can *sometimes* be found on the property deed.

14. Q: What are my options if these agencies cannot find my well log?

A: You have two options. One option is to drill a new well. The other option is to hire a professional to do a gamma log reading on the existing well.

15. Q: What is a gamma log reading and where can I find someone to perform this test?

A: A gamma log reading simply measures the depth of the sanitary seal from inside the well casing. Due to certain characteristics of the concrete in the sanitary seal, the gamma log equipment measures tiny differences between the concrete and the interior of the well. Contact a well driller for more information. Typically the two professionals work in tandem; the well driller must first remove the well head plate and pump in order for the gamma log equipment to fit inside the well. Unfortunately, this test can be costly and there are no guarantees that this test will determine whether there is 50-foot sanitary seal in the well.

WATER STORAGE TANK REQUIREMENTS

16. Q: What are the minimum requirements for the size of my water storage tank?

A: If the flow test results come back at 10 gallons per minute or less then the Department requires a minimum storage capacity of 1,000 gallon *in addition* to the fire department requirements.

17. Q: What are the fire department's minimum requirements for a water storage tank?

A: The size of the tank, which can be used to store water for both domestic and fire protection use, is based on the square footage of the house. For more details, call the Fire Marshall's office at (408) 299-5763.

SPRING AS A WATER SOURCE

18. Q: I have had little success in finding water on my property. Can I use a spring as my source of water?

A: Only if the spring is properly developed. See the *Checklist for Spring Development* on our website.

FINAL OCCUPANCY SIGNOFF

19. Q: How do I get final occupancy signoff?

A: Check your water clearance conditional letter and make sure that everything has been completed on the list. After all the conditions have been met then call the Department for an appointment with the Water Program Senior at (408) 918-3400.

WELL SETBACKS

20. Q: What are the setbacks for a well?

A: The primary setbacks considered for a well are the following:

Sewer	50-ft.
Subsurface sewage leaching field.....	100-ft.
Septic tank or pit privy.....	100-ft.
Cesspool or seepage pit.....	150-ft.
Animal or fowl enclosure.....	100-ft.

21. Q: What is the best test to ensure the potability of my well water.

A: A bacteriological test is best to determine that information. This test will determine if coliform bacteria are present or absent in your drinking water. Coliform bacteria are simple indicator organisms that reflect **possible** contamination of the well water. If you are in an agricultural area, it is advisable to test for excessively high nitrate concentration. For more information on nitrates, check out the SCVWD website at <http://www.valleywater.org>.

22. Q: How do I interpret the laboratory test result?

A: See *Interpretation of Water Analysis Report* on our website.

23. Q: What if my water sample comes back positive for total coliform/E. coli?

A: Double check the sampling procedures used to collect the sample. If you sampled the system incorrectly then retest by obtaining another sample. See our *Disinfection of a Contaminated Drinking Water System* information on our website for more details and our *Chlorine Suppliers List* on our website. Lastly, check out our *Troubleshooting a Contaminated Water System* on our website.

24. Q: How often should I test the potability of my private water system?

A: The minimum that testing should be done is annually. The recommendation would be biannually. If testing is done annually, the best time of year to test the water would be during the rainy season when the water table fluctuates.

DISINFECTION OF A CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

25. Q: What if my water sample for a bacteriological test came back positive?

A: Double check the sampling procedures used to collect the sample. If you sampled the system incorrectly then retest by obtaining another sample. See our *Disinfection of a Contaminated Drinking Water System* information on our website for more details and our *Chlorine Suppliers List* on our website. Lastly, check out our *Troubleshooting a Contaminated Water System* on our website.