

Well Abandonment Procedures

It is extremely important to seal unused old wells. Otherwise, contaminants from the surface can enter the aquifer through the old well casing. For this reason, Section 3701-28-17 of the State of Ohio Private Water System Rules require all private water systems (well, cisterns, etc.) that are permanently removed from service must be sealed and properly abandoned to prevent contamination of ground water. In addition, all dry holes or wells which no longer produce water must be sealed.

The sealing or abandonment of a drilled well involves filling the well hole with a material that does not permit the movement of water down through the old well casing. Although cement grout may be used, coarse grade Bentonite-- a granular or pelletized clay resembling cat litter—is the best material. Bentonite expands when it gets wet and prevents the old well casing from channeling surface water into the aquifer.

The abandonment procedure for a drilled well is as follows:

1. An abandonment permit is purchased from Greene County Public Health (GCPH).
2. Information about the well's age, depth, and casing size are obtained from the files GCPH and the volume of grout or Bentonite is calculated from this information.
3. The well cap, pump, plumbing, and fixtures are all removed from the well.
4. The well casing is cut off approximately 2' below grade.
5. The grout or Bentonite is slowly poured into the well until the casing is full.
6. The well is observed over the next 12 hours for any settling, and cement or grout is added to keep it full, if needed.
7. Form DNR 7810.12 is completed and filed with GCPH; and an inspection is scheduled.
8. A Sanitarian from GCPH will inspect the well to determine if the abandonment was done correctly. If so, the hole may be covered with soil and graded. If not, corrections must be made, and the abandonment must be re-inspected.

Abandonment of other types of wells—especially hand dug wells—is more complicated and cannot be adequately detailed in this fact sheet. If you have questions about these types of wells, please contact our office at (937) 374-5607.