

# wellcare<sup>®</sup> information for you about **Selecting a Well Contractor**

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## **Hiring a Water Well Professional**

Selecting the right water well professional is somewhat like searching for a new doctor or dentist. All are directly involved in your health. An experienced well professional is your best guarantee of a good supply of clean drinking water. Take the time to learn more to find the right person and company.

## **Well Professionals**

To find a well professional or drilling company, ask your neighbors, call your state water well association or local health department, check in the yellow pages of the telephone book under "water well drilling & well pump installations." Once you've identified a few prospective companies, ask a lot of questions.

- **References**

Ask for two to three references from former customers. Find out how long the company has worked in your area, how many wells they have drilled and how satisfied their customers really are.

- **Professional Qualifications**

Your well professional should be certified, licensed or registered with your state health or environmental agency. Specific requirements vary from state to state. Ask for proof of proper credentials and well association memberships.

- **Contracts**

A professional water well driller uses a written contract. The contract should include details of the job and warranties or guarantees, if any.

- **Insurance and Bonding**

A drilling company and its personnel should be insured. Some states require bonding; some do not. Find out what the law requires.

- **Local Geology**

An experienced driller knows about the geology of the area in which he or she drills and can clearly explain it to you.

- **State and Local Laws**

A knowledgeable driller knows state and local regulations that govern well drilling.

- **Maintenance and Repair**

Timely maintenance and repair services are important to well owners. A company that offers these services can make life easier for you and ensure the proper function of your well system.

## Responsibilities

Before signing a contract, discuss who is responsible for various aspects of the well construction or repair work.

- **Permits, Site Visits, Fees, Etc.**

The homeowner or his/her representative typically secures permits required by the local governments or health agency. A driller can tell you what agencies to contact and what fees must be paid. The driller coordinates site visits by inspectors and construction activities.

- **Well Location**

In most states, strict regulations govern location of the well. A competent driller knows the regulations and will tell you if health officials or other regulators must be present during the well location process.

- **Well Capacity**

The driller can estimate the water requirements for your household. Help your driller by discussing things like the number of bathrooms, the number of people in the household or anticipated water use for irrigation of lawns and gardens, spas, whirlpool baths or pools.

- **Water Quantity/Quality**

The quality and quantity of water from your well depends on the geology and hydrology of the area. Well water comes from underground aquifers, which exist throughout the ground at different depths. These "storage spaces" contain different amounts of water. A driller cannot tell you exactly how deep he/she will have to go to get water. An estimate can be based on other wells drilled in your area. A driller cannot predict the exact quality of the water that will be tapped. What a driller can do is make reasonable judgments about water quality based on previous experience.

- **Well Records**

Your driller should make a construction record (well log). Ask for a copy. If the law requires an inspection, keep that report as well. Keep repair bills and information on equipment purchases. Well records are very useful for maintenance purposes. Some states require the driller to submit records to regulatory agencies. Ask the driller what your state requires.

- **Troubleshooting**

Ask the well professional what will be done if water is not reached at the estimated depth. Also, ask what options are available if the water needs some form of treatment.

## Potential Cost

Finally, discuss the cost of well construction and maintenance or repair. There are several factors that will influence the final cost.

- **Depth of Well**

The depth of a well is a determining factor in figuring the basic cost of drilling and the cost of pipe, because most drillers charge by the foot. A driller will base estimates on what experience shows is an average depth for your area. If the water first tapped is adequate for your family, then drilling can stop. If not, then drilling may have to go deeper.

- **Materials and Equipment**

A complete well includes casing material, pipe, a pump, a tank and grout to seal the well. Choose superior quality products to improve the efficiency and longevity of the well.

- **State Regulations**

Most states require specific construction practices designed to protect health and the groundwater. Some states prohibit use of certain construction materials. Ask the driller how state construction requirements may effect cost.

- **Labor**

Labor is usually figured into the charge-per-foot for drilling a well. However, there may be labor costs for installing the pump and tank or for performing repairs on an existing well. Experience teaches a driller to anticipate problems that may occur. However, nature is full of surprises, some of which even the most experienced driller cannot anticipate.

- **Cost Effectiveness**

Over the long term, the cost of water from your well will be pennies per day. Even factoring in construction and routine maintenance, a private well is still cost effective when compared to other systems.

The Water Systems Council would like to thank the South Atlantic Well Drillers Association, representing water well professionals in the southeast, for providing guidance on selecting a well contractor.

## For more information on selecting a well contractor

*A Consumer's Guide to Water Wells*, the South Atlantic Well Drillers Association:  
www.well-drillers.com/consumer.html or 540-720-3329

*Before You Have a Well Drilled*, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water, Water Resources Section: www.ohiodnr.com/water/pubs/fs\_div/fctsht15.htm or 614-265-6740

The National Ground Water Association lists the state agencies responsible for water well driller licensing and registration at [www.ngwa.org/govaffairs/licnagen.html](http://www.ngwa.org/govaffairs/licnagen.html).

## For more information on your drinking water

The following sites provide up-to-date information on efforts to protect public water supplies and steps you can take as a private well owner:

Home*A*Syst Program	<a href="http://www.uwex.edu/homeasyst">www.uwex.edu/homeasyst</a>
The Groundwater Foundation	<a href="http://www.groundwater.org">www.groundwater.org</a>
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/safewater">www.epa.gov/safewater</a>
American Groundwater Trust	<a href="http://www.agwt.org">www.agwt.org</a>
National Ground Water Association	<a href="http://www.wellowner.org">www.wellowner.org</a>

## For more information about wells and other wellcare® publications

wellcare® is a program of the **Water Systems Council (WSC)**. WSC is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promote the wider use of wells as modern and affordable safe drinking water systems and to protect ground water resources nationwide.

Contact us at 888-395-1033 or visit [www.watersystemscouncil.org](http://www.watersystemscouncil.org)



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