

SELECTING A WELL CONTRACTOR

Selecting the right well contractor is somewhat like searching for a doctor or dentist. All are directly involved in your health. A licensed well contractor is your best assurance of a good, clean supply of drinking water. Take the time to find the right person or company for the job.

Locating a Licensed Well Contractor

To find a licensed well contractor or drilling company in your area, ask your neighbors for a referral, contact your state drillers or groundwater association, local health department, or the wellcare® Hotline at 888-395-1033 or visit our website at www.wellcarehotline.org. Once you have identified a few prospective companies, ask a lot of questions.

Professional Qualifications

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

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.

Contracts

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

Insurance and Bonding

A well drilling company and its personnel should be insured. Some states require bonding, some do not. Find out what the law requires in your area.

Local Geology

An experienced well contractor knows about the geology of the area in which to drill and can clearly explain it to you. You should also do some research on groundwater levels. Check the [U.S. Geological Survey's website](#) and [contact your local office](#) for more information.

Local and State Laws

A knowledgeable well contractor is familiar with local and state regulations that govern well drilling. You should also acquaint yourself with these regulations by contacting your local and state oversight agencies or [visit our website to search our State Well Codes](#).

Maintenance and Repair

Timely maintenance and repair services are important. 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 typically secures permits required by the local government or health agency. A well contractor can tell you what agencies to contact and approximate fees. The well contractor coordinates site visits by inspectors and construction activities.

Well Location

In most states, strict regulations govern location of the well. The well contractor should know the regulations and will tell you if health officials or other regulators must be present during the well location process.

Well Capacity

The well contractor can estimate the water requirements for your household. Help your contractor by discussing things like the number of bathrooms, the number of people in the household, and anticipated water use.

Water Quantity and Quality

The quantity and quality 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 well contractor cannot tell you exactly how deep they will have to go to get water. An estimate can be based on the other wells drilled in your area.

In addition, a well contractor cannot predict the exact quality of water that will be tapped. What a contractor can do is make reasonable judgements about water quality based on previous experience. However, some states or localities may have regulations on minimum quantity and or quality of water on newly drilled wells. Check with your state or local environmental agency for these regulations.

Well Records

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

Troubleshooting

Discuss with the well contractor 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, maintenance, and repair. There are several factors that will influence the final cost, including:

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 well contractor 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

Some of the components of a well include casing, pipes, a pump, a tank, and grout to seal the well. Talk to the well contractor to determine additional equipment you will need and try to choose quality products to improve the efficiency and longevity of the well.

State Regulations

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

Labor

Labor is usually figured into the charge-per-foot for drilling a well. There may be labor costs for installing the pump and tank or for performing repairs on an existing well. Experience teaches a well contractor to anticipate problems that may occur. However, nature is full of surprises. Some of which even the most experienced well contractor 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.

For More Information on Selecting a Well Contractor

If you need help locating a licensed well contractor in your area try [our interactive map](#).

If you need further assistance selecting a well contractor, contact your local or state health department, state environmental agency, the local extension service, your state water well or groundwater association, or contact the [wellcare®](#) Hotline at 888-395-1033 or www.wellcarehotline.org.



Information to help maintain and protect your water well system:

[wellcare®](#) is a program of the [Water Systems Council \(WSC\)](#). WSC is the only national organization solely focused on protecting the health and water supply of an estimated 23 million households nationwide who depend on private wells (according to the U.S. EPA).

This publication is one of more than 100 [wellcare®](#) information sheets available FREE at www.watersystemscouncil.org.

Well owners and others with questions about wells and well water can contact the [wellcare®](#) Hotline at 1-888-395-1033 or visit www.wellcarehotline.org to fill out a contact form or chat with us live!

JOIN THE WELLCARE® WELL OWNERS NETWORK!

By joining the FREE [wellcare®](#) Well Owners Network, you will receive regular information on how to maintain your well and protect your well water.

Contact us at 1-888-395-1033 or visit www.wellcarehotline.org to join!