

Requirements for Well Plugging and Abandonment

Wells that are not properly plugged can act as a preferential pathway for surface contaminants to reach and impair ground water quality, and could cause injury to livestock, wildlife, or humans. Permittees, consultants, and others who construct and install monitor wells, test wells, injection wells, artificial recharge wells, public drinking water supply wells, and geothermal wells are reminded that wells that are no longer useful must be plugged in order to ensure that ground water is protected and preserved for future use, and to eliminate the potential for physical injury. Wells need to be properly plugged and abandoned when they “... *have not been used for a period of one year, unless the owner demonstrates his intention to use the well again by properly maintaining it*”.

Properly maintaining a well means: 1) the well has no defects which will allow the impairment of the quality of water in the well or in the water bearing formations penetrated; 2) the well is covered and the cover is water-tight; 3) the well is marked so that it can be clearly seen; and 4) the area surrounding the well is kept clear of brush or debris. (Water Quality Rules and Regulations, Chapter 26, Section 11 “Plugging and Abandonment”).

Plugging and abandonment requirements (Water Quality Rules and Regulations, Chapter 26, Section 11) include: filling and sealing part, or all of the well with impervious material; marking the location of the well; and filing a plugging and abandonment report. Abandoned public water supply wells must be plugged by filling the well with cement grout (Water Quality Rules and Regulations, Chapter 12, Section 9).

Further information on the requirements for well plugging and abandonment, including a form to report the plugging and abandonment of wells can be downloaded from the Groundwater Section’s webpage:

Plugging and Abandonment Requirements:

http://deq.state.wy.us/wqd/groundwater/downloads/Rules%20and%20Regs/Chapter_26.pdf

Plugging and Abandonment form:

<http://deq.state.wy.us/wqd/groundwater/downloads/P&A%20Form.pdf>

Plugging requirements for mineral exploration boreholes are regulated by the Department’s Land Quality Division (307-777-7756).