

How to Locate Abandoned Wells on Your Property

1. *Search for water well drilling logs or old billing statements that show well depth and well location.*
2. *Information can be found by contacting any of the following sources: (a) the contractor who drilled or serviced the well, (b) the local health department, (c) the EGLE, Geological Resources Management Division.*
3. *If there are no records available for your well, look for the following:*
 - Pipes sticking out of the ground.
 - Pipes sticking through wall or floor in the basement.
 - Electrical switch boxes out in the yard.
 - Cement pits in or under sheds.
 - Windmills.
 - Old crock, brick, or stone structures.
 - Old hand pumps
4. *For locating buried wells:*
 - Metal detectors may be used to find buried steel well casings.
 - First, locate where the old water line exited the home or building.
 - From this point, survey the ground with the metal detector moving away from the structure.
 - Use a marker to designate the location of any readings you get.
 - Well casings will typically be 4 to 5 feet below grade and will be located between 3 to 25 feet from your home.

*This material was created by the
Michigan Rural Water Association.*

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Plugging



Abandoned Water Wells

Protecting Your Safety,
Health and the
Environment

Unplugged Abandoned Wells Pose Safety, Health and Environmental Threats

Safety Hazard—Each year the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) receives reports of people, mostly children, falling into old wells. Injury or death may result.

Health Hazard—Abandoned wells act as conduits for contaminants to move from the surface into deeper aquifers. Drinking water contamination has been caused by abandoned wells.

Environmental Hazard—Deteriorated well casings or open, uncased boreholes allow movement of water between previously separated aquifers. This can degrade water quality. Abandoned wells have also been used for illegal dumping of waste.

What is an Abandoned Water Well?

An *abandoned water well* is defined as a well which:

- has its use permanently discontinued.
- is in such disrepair that its continued use for obtaining groundwater is impractical.
- has been left uncompleted.
- is a threat to groundwater resources.
- is or may be a health or safety hazard.



A *temporarily abandoned well* is a well which is not in use but is intended by the owner to be used as a source of groundwater. To be classified as temporarily abandoned, a well casing must:

- be securely sealed with a threaded, welded, or solvent welded cap to prevent access into the well and eliminate openings into the well.
- Comply with isolation distance and construction requirements.

Who is Responsible for Plugging Abandoned Water Wells?

The property owner is responsible for plugging an abandoned water well.

A registered well drilling contractor or his/her employee may plug a well at any residence, farm, industry, business or other water supply facility.

Examples of Abandoned Wells That Must Be Plugged

- Wells that are not operational.
- Wells that are disconnected and taken out of service at the time connection is made to the municipal water system.
- Any inoperable or abandoned well which is not properly sealed can be a safety or environmental hazard.

For Further Information, contact:

Shelby Township
Phone: 231-861-5853