

WHO CAN I TALK TO ABOUT MY WELL?

Contact the Mason County Public Health at (360) 427-9670 and ask to speak with someone in the Drinking Water Program. That person can provide information on well decommissioning methods and can explain the law as it applies to abandoned wells.

Contact the Washington State Department of Ecology at (360) 407-6650 concerning Washington State law and regulations as they apply to wells and well decommissioning.

The Washington State Department of Ecology also maintains a toll-free phone number: 1-800-468-0261 for well-related questions

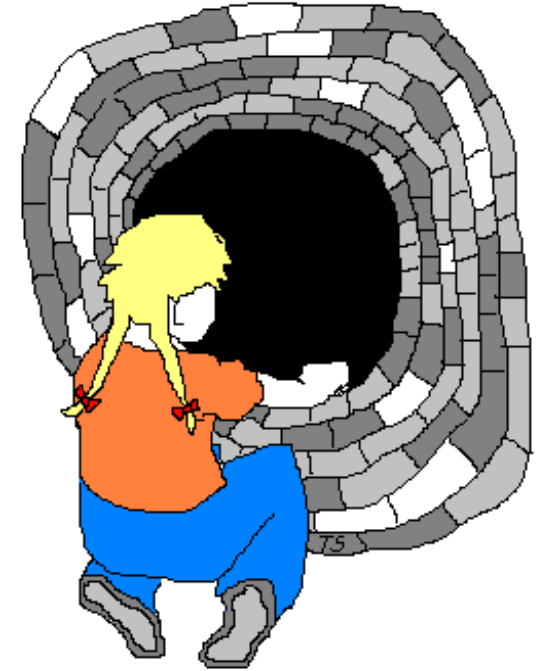
If the well is in another county, contact the appropriate local health department, Washington State Department of Ecology, or this office for more information.

**MASON COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**
PO BOX 1666
SHELTON, WA 98584

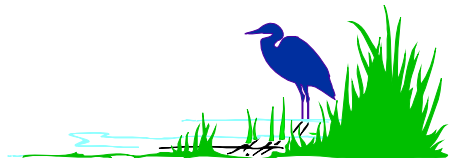
**SHELTON (360) 427-9670
Fax (360) 427-8442
ALSO:**

**ELMA (360) 482-5269
BELFAIR (360) 275-4467**

THE ABANDONED WELL- A HIDDEN DANGER



**MASON COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**



WHAT IS AN ABANDONED WELL?

Any well that is no longer in use is an "abandoned" well. They are often forgotten about and become a hidden danger to people and animals.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Abandoned wells can be safety hazards; people and animals can fall into wells and become seriously injured. Wells can also be public health hazards causing contamination of ground water.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH AN ABANDONED WELL?

Mason County Ordinances and Washington Administrative Code require that any abandoned well, any well that is a safety hazard, or any well that threatens public health, must be properly decommissioned.

CAN I JUST LEAVE THE WELL ALONE?

No, state and local law requires that when a well is no longer being used, it must be properly decommissioned.

HOW DO YOU DECOMMISSION THE WELL?

In general, decommissioning a hand dug well is done by filling the well with clean sand below the water level and the remainder with concrete. Decommissioning a drilled well requires a different method. Please contact Mason County Public Health, or the Washington State Department of Ecology for details.

WHO CAN DECOMMISSION A WELL?

Decommissioning must be done by a licensed well driller.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DECOMMISSIONING AN ABANDONED WELL?

The current property owner is responsible for well decommissioning.

IF THE WELL IS A SAFETY HAZARD, WHAT SHOULD I DO FIRST?

Make it safe. Secure the top of the well to prevent a person or animal from falling into the well. Decommissioning can then follow. Contact a well driller or Mason County Public Health for assistance.

DECOMMISSIONING SOUNDS EXPENSIVE; WHY CAN'T I FILL THE WELL WITH DIRT OR GARBAGE?

To protect the public health (ground water provides valuable drinking water in Mason County), State law prohibits filling the well with "dirt" or any other unapproved material.

WHAT CAN I DO IF THERE IS AN ABANDONED WELL ON MY NEIGHBOR'S PROPERTY?

Contact Mason County Public of Health and file a complaint. Your complaint can be made anonymously, however, you will be asked for the property owner's name, street address and parcel number, if known. Mason County Public Health will provide follow up and assistance.

WHAT IF I WANT TO KEEP THE WELL TO IRRIGATE MY GARDEN?

Contact Mason County Public Health and ask about obtaining a waiver to keep the well for that purpose. If a waiver can be granted, irrigation of more than 1/2 acre of **non-commercial** lawn and garden will require a water right permit from the Washington State Department of Ecology.