



Wellhead Protection - the Area Around the Well Counts!

Inspecting the wellhead (above ground portion of the well) every year helps a well owner discover potential issues before they become expensive problems.

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Photo: Mark Madden, Penn State Extension

Use this checklist to look for potential problems:

- Check the general condition of the well casing and be sure it extends at least 12 inches above ground.
- Check the condition of the well cap and any seals. The cap should be securely attached and keep out insects and rodents. A damaged cap can allow ants, bees, spiders, earwigs, etc. to set up

housekeeping in your well. We recommend a sanitary or "vermin-proof" cap be used.

- Look to visually verify that all electrical connections are secure and wires are not exposed.
- Survey the area around the well for potential sources of contamination, flooding, and physical dangers.
- Maintain at least 100 feet between the well and any kennels, pastures, feeding areas, or livestock operations. Remove chemicals such as paint, fertilizer, pesticides,

or motor oil if possible and store them elsewhere. Don't have anything in that recharge area you don't want in your water.

- Be sure proper distances are maintained from buildings, waste systems, or chemical storage areas (including fuel tanks)--observe all local codes and requirements.
- Be sure the ground surrounding the wellhead slopes away from the well to divert surface runoff. If not, change the slope of the ground around the well casing to prevent ponding around the casing.
- If the well is equipped with a vented well cap, make sure the screen is intact and clear of debris and can prevent insects and animals from entering the well.
- The well should not be located in a roadway or driveway. If it is close to a roadway or driveway, it should be properly marked to avoid being hit by vehicles. Homeowners can place bumper posts near the well to increase visibility, especially if the well is located near a driveway and it snows where you live. It's easy to damage or bury a well while removing snow.
- Keep the well out of dog runs or animal pens.
- If your well is located in a low-lying area prone to flooding, consider having a water well systems professional raise the well casing to at least 12 inches above the historic record flood level, properly sealing the wiring conduit and providing casing bump protection if floating debris is a concern. Another option is to drill a new well outside the flood-prone area.

A qualified groundwater professional should inspect the well casing and cap every 10 years to ensure all is in good order. Replacing a standard well cap with a sanitary well cap, shock chlorination of the well, and extending the well casing are all services a qualified professional can provide, if needed.

Adapted from Wellhead Protection, www.wellowner.org.

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