

How Do Unused Wells Threaten Groundwater?

Groundwater is found in underground geologic formations called *aquifers*. The layers of rock and soil that lie between an aquifer and the surface, typically act as a natural barriers against the spread of contamination. However, an unused, unsealed well can provide an open channel between the surface and an aquifer, acting as a drain—allowing surface water runoff, contaminated water, or improperly disposed waste to reach an uncontaminated aquifer.

What Does the Law Require?

By law, a well must be in use, be under a *maintenance permit*, or be sealed by a licensed well contractor. A well must be sealed if: 1) the well is not in use, 2) the well is contaminated, 3) the well has been improperly sealed in the past, 4) the well threatens the quality of the groundwater, or 5) the well otherwise poses a threat to health or safety.

If you have an unused well—and wish to keep the well for future use—you must apply for a special *maintenance permit* from the MN Department of Health, which requires an annual fee.

Do you have an unused well?

Find out how you can receive funding to have it sealed



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