



Steps to Construct, Alter and Seal a Private Water System (PWS)

December 2012

The following seven steps will help guide a property owner, homeowner, or home builder through the process of having a private water system (PWS) constructed, altered, or sealed on their property. Private water systems include wells, cisterns, hauled water storage tanks, springs and ponds.

1. Review the Private Water Systems Rules

- a. Prior to beginning the process of constructing, altering, and/or sealing a private water system, review the Private Water Systems Rules (Chapter 3701-28 of the Ohio Administrative Code). Both private water systems contractors and property owners are responsible for following the private water systems rules. If you have questions about the rules, this is the time to contact your Local Health District office or the Ohio Department of Health to get answers. The private water systems rules are available at the local health district office or on the Ohio department of Health website at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/rules/final/f3701-28.aspx>.

2. Who is performing the work on the private water system

- a. If you plan to hire a contractor to construct your private water system, the contractor must be registered and bonded with the Ohio Department of Health. A current list of registered private water systems contractors is available on the Ohio Department of Health website at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/water/PrivateWaterSystems/List-of-PWSContractors.aspx>.
- b. If you are a property owner planning to work on property owned by another property owner or are constructing, altering, or sealing a private water system on your own property, you must obtain registration through the Ohio Department of Health. Contact the Ohio Department of Health's Private Water Systems Program at (614) 644-7558.

3. Applying to to Construct, Alter, and/or Seal a Private Water System

A PWS permit must be obtained from the local health district before the construction, alteration, and sealing of a private water system. **Note:** Penalty fees will be assessed to the permit fees if work begins prior to obtaining a permit unless the work meets the conditions addressed in OAC rule 3701-28-02(H) and rule 3701-28-02(A)(1)(a). See section 3709.09(D) of the Ohio Revised Code for the penalty fee requirements.

- a. Complete the permit application. The local health district will ask you to provide the name of the private water systems contractor you intend to hire. You must sign and date the application.
- b. Complete the Site Plan.
 - i. Site plans may be completed by the property owner, private water systems contractor or the health department sanitarians;
 - ii. A site plan shall have a drawing of the property indicating all possible sources of contamination;
 - iii. A site plan shall document all distances relative to the placement of the private water system and must be compliant with Ohio Administrative Code rule 3701-28-07.
- c. If the private water system serves a building or multiple dwellings or the private water system to be constructed is a pond, cistern, spring, or flowing (artesian) well, additional plans are required as per Ohio Administrative Code rule 3701-28-03(E) and (F).

4. Validation of the permit application

- a. Once the application has been reviewed by the local health district, the local health district sanitarian will sign and date it if all information is compliant with the private water systems rules. If they application cannot be approved, the sanitarian will contact you about what may need to be done to approve the permit.
- b. Once you receive a copy of the approved permit, you will be given a copy of the permit by the local health district. A copy of the permit should be given to the private water systems contractor prior to beginning the work. The permit to construct, alter, or seal expires one (1) year from the date of validation by the sanitarian.

5. Site Plan Changes

- a. If there is a need to change the location of the private water system as shown on the original site plan, you and the private water systems contractor are responsible for contacting the local health district to receive approval prior to the construction.
- 6. Completion of the private water system construction, alteration, and/or sealing**
 - a. Upon completion of the construction, alteration, and/or sealing or a portion of the private water system, required forms must be submitted to the local health district within time frames addressed in Ohio Administrative Code rules 3701-28-03(O), (P), (Q), and (R).
 - b. The local health district will review all submitted forms for compliance.
- 7. Final Inspection, Water Sampling, and Permit Approval**
 - a. Upon review of all submitted forms and if the local health district determines the work was done within compliance of the rules, the local health district should make contact with you to arrange for a final inspection and the collection of a water sample.
 - b. The final inspection will further determine compliance of the construction, alteration, and/or sealing of the private water system.
 - c. The water sample will be tested by an approved ODH or OEPA laboratory to determine if the water supply meets the Microbiological Standards (<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/~media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/eh/water/factsheet/microbiologicalstandards.ashx>).
 - d. If the results of the final inspection and water sample as well as the information documented on the required forms meet compliance with Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-28, the permit will be approved.
 - i. If any results or observances are non-compliant with the private water systems rules, corrections must be made prior to the approval of the private water systems permit.

Any well (including non-potable, agricultural, irrigation, geothermal, or monitoring wells), cistern, hauled water storage tank, spring, or pond that is not approved as a private water system cannot be used as a private water system until the system meets compliance with Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-28. If you have any questions about using a water system that has not been previously approved as a private water system, contact your Local Health District office.

Helpful Hints:

- To learn about the availability of groundwater and the depth of wells in your area, visit the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Soil and Water website at <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/water/maptechs/wellogs/appNEW/> to review well logs. If you do not have internet access, you can contact the ODNR office at (614) 265-6740.
- Contact several private water systems contractors to get written estimates for the construction of your private water system.
- Always contact your local health district about the permitting requirements for private water systems. If you are not sure which Local Health District to contact, go to <https://odhgateway.odh.ohio.gov/lhdinformationsystem/Directory/GetMyLHD> or call the Ohio Department of Health Private Water Systems Program at (614) 644-7558.
- If possible, be present to observe the construction of your private water system. You may want to take pictures for documentation and record keeping. Depending on the type of drilling equipment used and the depth of the well, you can expect the drilling process to take several hours to several days.

Where can I get more information?

**Ohio Department of Health
Private Water Systems
246 N. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 644-7558
Fax: (614) 466-4556
BEH@odh.ohio.gov**