

GUIDELINES FOR SECURING THE SERVICES OF A WATER WELL DRILLER

The following guidelines are provided to assist individual homeowners or small business owners in obtaining the services of a licensed water well driller. Please note that following these guidelines neither guarantees a problem-free contractual relationship with the driller nor does it relieve the parties to the agreement from complying with applicable regulations of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the Mississippi State Department of Health, or other interested state and federal agencies.

- **You may need a permit from MDEQ** - State law requires that you obtain a groundwater withdrawal permit for water wells with surface casing diameters 6-inches or greater in diameter. Some exclusions apply to this requirement.
- **Always ask to see the driller's license** - State law requires all water well drillers operating in Mississippi to be licensed by the state, regardless of the size or type of well being drilled. This requirement ensures that only knowledgeable drillers be allowed to operate in the state. Another requirement is for drillers to submit a driller's log (record) on every well they drill.
- **Insist on a written agreement or contract** - A reputable well driller should not hesitate to provide a detailed written proposal for you to accept (as witnessed by your signature on the document) or to provide a formal written contract for both parties to sign prior to drilling and completion of a well. Such a document should clearly state the anticipated dates for starting and completing the well.
- **Read the proposal or contract document carefully** - Make sure that you understand exactly what equipment, materials, supplies, and services the well driller is including in the price for the work. The following checklist is offered only as a guide for review of contracts or proposals:
 1. **Cost** - An itemized list of estimated charges is better than a lump sum proposal. The list could include the following associated costs:
 - a) Actual drilling (per foot of depth);
 - a) Casing (per foot);
 - b) Other materials, such as drive shoe, grout, and well cap;
 - c) Various procedures, such as well grouting, well developing, test pumping, and well disinfection.
 - d) Drilling the well deeper and the costs of drilling a second well, if required to ensure an adequate water supply; and
 - e) Proper well abandonment (plugging) should it prove necessary.

2. **Estimated depth of well** - The depth of a well that is included in the price and address any added cost or credit that will result from variations in depth should be included..
 3. **Pumping equipment, controls, wiring, and piping** - These documents should clearly state the pump size to be installed (usually measured in horsepower), guarantee a minimum volume of water (for example 10 gallons per minute) and a discharge pressure (for example 30 pounds per square inch). Documentation should specify all materials and equipment to be furnished and installed by the driller including, but not necessarily limited to, casing, screen, pump, concrete pad, piping, wiring, softeners, tanks, back-flow preventers, and automatic controls. Also, contracts or proposals should clearly spell out which party will be responsible for connecting the pump to the existing electrical service and to the owner's existing water lines.
 4. **Construction standards** - The contract should state that all work will be completed in accordance with industry standards and requirements prescribed by applicable state regulations.
 5. **Well completion and testing** - Documentation should be provided that specifies how the well will be developed, the testing that will be performed by the driller to assure that the well supplies the required volume of water, and the intended disinfection procedure that will be used to ensure the well meets drinking water standards established by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Cleanup of the drilling site upon well completion should also be addressed in the contract.
 6. **Guarantees / warranties** - The contract or proposal should clearly state the terms and conditions of any guarantees or warranties provided by the driller with regard to materials, equipment, workmanship, and well performance.
- **Finished well checklist** - After a well is completed and before the contractor removes his equipment from the site, you should inspect the well and obtain some important information from the well driller. A partial list of some items that should be checked includes the following:
1. **Well yield** - How many gallons per minute the well produced during the testing? How much the water level dropped during the testing? At what depth is the pump installed in the well? How quickly did the water level recover after the test?
 2. **Well cap** - If a pump has not been set in the well, a cap should be placed over the end of the well casing to ensure security. Such caps should extend 6 inches above ground level.

3. **Disinfection** - Has the well been disinfected? Ask the driller or contractor for a copy of the water quality report from the Mississippi State Department of Health or private laboratory that analyzed your water sample. This report should state that the well is free of contaminants such as coliform bacteria.
4. **Well Construction Record** - You should request a copy of the well record (drillers' log) that the contractor is required to submit to the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality for each well they drill. It would be advisable to keep your well record with the deed to your property so that the information is accessible if needed or passed on to future owners.

➤ **Keep in mind. . .**

- Contractors cannot guarantee the quality of water from wells which may affect your degree of satisfaction. Natural groundwater conditions, such as taste, odor, and color, are normally beyond the control of water well contractors or drillers. Water may prove objectionable even though it is free of contaminants and meets all drinking water standards.
- Trust the contractor's judgment in solving unforeseen problems that may arise in certain instances. However, you should be mindful that these unforeseen problems may result in additional costs for drilling and completion of your well.
- If the original construction plans must be changed for any reason, discuss the available options with the contractor.
- After contractual obligations have been completed, don't expect the contractor to work for free if the well does not meet your expectations.