



10 Tips



Homeowners' Guidelines for Protecting and Maintaining Wells in Delaware

- 1.** Maintain the integrity of the well stickup (the pipe that sticks out of the ground above the well) by keeping it at least 8 inches above the surface. To maintain the required minimal height, don't add fill dirt or allow precipitation and runoff deposits to accumulate, shortening the pipe's height.
- 2.** Make sure the well cap and well tag remain tightly secured to the casing and that the well vent screen is not torn or missing.
- 3.** Keep contaminants such as pesticide containers, fuel tanks, paints and other sources of contamination including dog, rabbit or other animal pens, as well as pet graves, at least 100 feet away from the well head.
- 4.** Maintain the yard area in the immediate vicinity of the well head so that the well stickup remains clearly visible. Keep the grass trimmed and the area free of weeds and other vegetation.
- 5.** Don't cover the well head with decorative landscape items such as fake rocks, logs, plants, light houses or bird baths. These items have the tendency to draw insects, spiders, reptiles and amphibians. Small insects such as ants and ludwigs are small enough to pass through the vent screens of many wells and can get into the well water and potentially be drawn into the water distribution lines.
- 6.** Determine the location of the water supply line and any electrical wires coming from the well. Remain aware of the well's location and be careful to ensure that any excavations in that area are shallow enough so as not to damage water lines or wires.
- 7.** Make the well casing stickup highly visible when equipment is being used in the area containing the well. Installing temporary red reflectors around the well head or using other visible markers will help protect the well stickup from being hit and damaged by equipment.
- 8.** Don't spray herbicides or pesticides near the well head.
- 9.** Contact a licensed water well contractor if your well becomes damaged and needs repair, no longer functions satisfactorily (a significant drop in water pressure) and/or has a noticeable change in water quality. Only licensed water well contractors, well drillers and pump installers are allowed to open and repair a well.
- 10.** Routine water samples should be taken prior to putting a new well into use and checked at least annually thereafter for bacteria and routine chemicals. The most important routine chemicals to check include nitrates, iron, sodium and ph. Private well test kits for bacteria and common chemicals can be obtained for a nominal fee at the Delaware Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Units with locations in Sussex, Kent, and New Castle counties.