



# Frequently Asked Questions about Well Drilling Fees

For Well Operators & Homeowners

Water Resources Program

## For more information:

Online visit:  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html)  
– click on wells

To leave a recorded message, call  
1-800-468-0261

Dept of Ecology, HQ  
PO Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504

**Bellingham**  
Field Office  
1204 Railroad Ave, #200  
Bellingham WA 98225

**Bellevue**  
Northwest Region Office  
3190 – 160th Ave. SE  
Bellevue WA 98008  
(425) 649-7000

**Olympia**  
Southwest Region Office  
PO Box 47775  
Olympia WA 98504  
(360) 407-6300

**Vancouver**  
Field Office  
2108 Grand Blvd.  
Vancouver WA 98661  
(360) 690-7171

**Yakima**  
Central Region Office  
15 W Yakima Ave, #200  
Yakima WA 98902  
(360) 575-2490

**Spokane**  
Eastern Region Office  
N. 4601 Monroe, #202  
Spokane WA 99205  
(509) 329-3400

In 2005, the Legislature passed a new law that updates the fee structure for water wells, and adds a fee for decommissioning wells. This is the first time the fee structure has been changed since adoption in 1993. The modified law also defines and sets fees for regulated ground source heat pump borings and grounding wells.

## **Q: When did the new fee structure go into effect?**

**A:** The new fees went into effect on July 24, 2005.

## **Q: When is a fee required to drill a well in Washington State?**

**A:** The fee is due at the same time Ecology is given notice. This is at least 72 hours before the well is constructed or decommissioned. There is no fee to construct or decommission a geotechnical soil boring, although you must still give prior notice.

## **Q: What are the new fees for water wells?**

**A:** The fee for water wells with a top casing of less than 12 inches is \$200 per well. If the top casing is 12 inches or greater, the fee is \$300 per well. The fee for construction of dewatering systems is \$40 for each 200 horizontal lineal feet, or portion thereof. The fee for decommissioning a water well is \$50 per well.

## **Q: Do I owe another fee if I drill a well, but don't find water?**

**A:** If a first attempt at drilling results in an unusable well, there is no added fee for a second attempt as long as:

1. The second attempt is made immediately, while the drill rig is still on site.
2. The unusable well, or dry hole, is properly decommissioned before the driller leaves the site.
3. Well reports describing all the construction and decommissioning actions are submitted as required.

This regulation is intended to help a property owner if more than one attempt is necessary to find water. However, you must file a new Notice of Intent and pay a fee for any follow-up construction work after the drilling equipment has left the drill site. This includes drilling another well, deepening a well, or installing more casing.



**Q: What are the fees for resource protection, environmental investigation wells and ground source heat pump borings/grounding wells?**

**A:** A \$40 fee is required for each resource protection well constructed. There is a \$40 site fee for up to four environmental investigation wells, ground source heat pump borings or grounding wells. There is a \$10 fee for every well installed after the initial site fee of \$40. Geotechnical soil borings are exempt from fees, although a Notice of Intent is still required. See the notice of intent for each well for specific instructions for fee calculation.

To construct more than one resource protection, environmental investigation, ground source heat pump boring, grounding well, or geotechnical soil boring than originally planned, you must submit a copy of the original notice and the required fee within 24 hours after all wells have been completed, or as soon as you know the final number of wells to be constructed.

**Q: Can I request a refund if my plans change and a well is not drilled?**

**A:** If your plans change, a written request for a refund can be made on a form provided by us. The refund will be made to the person who submitted the fee. A refund request can be made no later than six months after we received the original fee. Please include a copy of the Notice of Intent receipt, along with the reason why the well was not constructed.

**Q. Is there a time limit in which I have to drill a well?**

**A.** No. Although you have six months to request a refund, a “Notice of Intent to Construct a Well” does not have a time limit.

**Q. Where do I send my fee payment?**

**A.** All fee payments must be mailed to:

Department of Ecology  
Cashiering Unit  
PO Box 47611  
Olympia WA 98504-7611

---

*If you need this publication in an alternate format, please call the Water Resources Program at 360-407-6600. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.*