

Well Works Permits Applicant Information

3

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

July 2009

Who manages groundwater?

The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) is responsible for managing groundwater resources and permitting bores in Tasmania to ensure groundwater users and the environment are considered and protected.

Why does the Department need to manage well works?

Although groundwater is a renewable resource, it needs to be managed to ensure that the aquifer, existing licence holders and the environment are protected. DPIPWE has a legal obligation to consider the potential impacts of well works to existing users of groundwater, and surface water resources, and the potential impacts to the environment.

What is a well?

A well (or bore) is usually thought of as drilled holes constructed by drilling rigs. However the definition of a well is far broader and includes any bore or other excavation used to access groundwater.

Do I need a permit to construct a well or bore to access and use groundwater?

Yes. State legislation requires that all 'well works' undertaken to give access to groundwater for water supply require a well works permit, anywhere in Tasmania. This includes major alterations to, or replacement of, a water supply well.

Some other types of bore construction do not require a permit. Wells exempt from requiring a permit include data supply wells related to geotechnical, engineering, construction, mineral exploration, contaminant investigation and water monitoring purposes.

Do I need a permit to clean out my well?

No. Minor maintenance not involving deepening by more than 1.5 metres, or substantial changes to the casing or screen do not require a well works permit.

Where do I get a Well Works Permit from?

To get a permit to construct a well you need to apply to the Department using the approved application form.

The Department accepts applications and issues permits in accordance with Part 7 of the *Water Management Act 1999*.

How much does it cost to get a Well Works Permit?

A well works permit application currently costs \$251.37. This is equivalent to 189 fee units and will change as the value of a fee unit increases over time.

How do I pay?

You can pay at any Service Tasmania shop or by attaching a cheque to your application form.

How long does it take to get a Well Works Permit approved?

The time taken to process a Well Works Permit is dependent upon each application. In general you should allow at least 10 working days to process a permit for non-commercial water supply and up to 2 -3 times as long for a commercial permit, depending on the degree of complexity.

Does a Well Works Permit application require advertising?

No. Advertising is not required for well works, however it will be required for associated water licence applications where applicable.

Do I need a water licence to use water from my well?

Not currently. An owner or occupier of land may take groundwater from their well for any purpose unless their land has been appointed a Groundwater Area.

There are currently no Groundwater Areas in Tasmania. However parts of the state will become Groundwater Areas as use of the resource increases.

What is a Groundwater Area?

Groundwater Areas are established in areas where groundwater has been intensively developed, or has the potential to be developed and management is required. Within a Groundwater Area a water licence is required to take water above reasonable stock and domestic requirements.

Who can I get to construct my well?

All water well drilling contractors must hold a current Tasmanian Drillers Licence issued by the Department. Their level of qualification determines the type of bores they can drill.

How many wells can I apply for?

You can apply for a maximum of 3 water supply wells using the same application form as long as they are on the same parcel of land.

How long is a Well Works Permit Valid for?

Unless stated otherwise in the conditions of your permit, your permit is valid for 2 years from the date of issue. This means you have a 2 year period from when you can start and complete construction of your authorised well.

Please note once construction has commenced you have a maximum of 90 working days to ensure construction details are forwarded onto the Department whether the Well Works are complete or not. Your driller should be aware of these rules.

Do I need a separate permit to construct test holes when looking for water for my well?

No. A Well Works Permit of some sort is required every time you construct or alter a well for the purpose of accessing groundwater. However, you do not need to obtain a separate permit to construct test holes as long as at the completion of the activity only the authorised well(s) are functional.

For example if you need a well for irrigation purposes you can obtain a permit to construct one irrigation well. The permit conditions will allow for the drilling of up to 10 'test holes' when looking for water. These holes must be drilled in accordance with permit conditions and must be decommissioned by a licensed driller if not used to construct your authorised irrigation well.

Note a separate drilling log is required for each and every bore drilled under the well works permit whether abandoned or constructed as a functional bore.

What if I change my mind about the wells I want or need?

If you wish to change the type of well authorised on the permit; or (E.g. S&D to Irrigation), or change the terms and conditions of a permit, you must apply for a variation to the Well Works Permit using the approved application form.

Do I need a water meter for my well?

If you are in a groundwater area, or an area managed under a Water Management Plan, you may be required to install an approved water meter on your well.

For commercial users of groundwater we **highly recommend** you install a water meter at the time of construction to monitor your wells performance over time and keep a record of water use.

All water meters must be installed in accordance with the DPIPWE metering standards. Contact your Regional Water Management Officer for further information regarding water metering or see the web page: www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/water/licensing_allocation_and_works_permits/water_metering

How do I measure the water level in my new well?

It is highly recommended you install a conduit, airline or other device to allow measurement of the standing water level in your well. If you have a commercial well or well in an area of significance for the Department, it will be a condition of the permit to install conduit or airline to allow for water level measurement with a dip meter. Advise your driller and/or pump installer of this requirement during construction or pump installation.

What if I sell my land? Can the permit remain valid for the new owner?

Yes. A Well Works Permit can be passed on ('enure') from one landowner to the next upon written notification to the Department. An administrative variation to permit register is required to register the new land owner as the permit holder. An application to vary a Well Works Permit is required to be submitted to the Department with proof of land ownership.

Where can I get my water tested?

It is recommended you have your groundwater tested upon completion of your well to ensure the quality is suitable for the proposed use. Your permit conditions may also specify the water must be tested and results forwarded to the Department.

It is recommended you use a NATA certified laboratory for bore water analysis. Look in your telephone directory or search for a facility online at www.nata.asn.au

CONTACT DETAILS

For further information, to obtain an application contact your Regional Water Management Officer.

Ph: 1300 368 550

Web: www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/water



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