

Cowlitz County Health Department

Process for Developing a Group B Public Water System from a Drilled Well

Step 1: Nearby Public Water Systems

Determine if there are any other public water systems nearby that can provide water. If so it is recommended that you connect to the already existing public water system. If your location is within the water service area of another public system you may be required to connect to that water system.

Step 2: Type of System

Determine whether the system needs to be approved as a Group B Public Water System or a Group A Public Water System. If there are 15 connections or more, or the water will be accessible to 25 or more people for at least 60 days of the year, the water system would need to be approved as a Group A Water System by the Washington State Department of Health. Contact this office at (360) 414-5599 ext 6442 to discuss the proposed water system if you are unsure of the type of water system.

Step 3: Water Rights

A water right from Department of Ecology will be required if the water system will use over 5000gpd of water in any day of the year not including the ½ acre lawn or noncommercial garden exemption. See Chapter 3 of the Group B Water System Design Guidelines for more detailed information. The Southwest Regional Office of the Department Of Ecology phone number is (360) 407-6300.

Step 4: Well Site Inspection

An application available on this website needs to be completed and turned into the Cowlitz County Health Department with the applicable fee. A well site inspection will be made from a representative of the Health Department to determine if the well location is acceptable for Public Water. Public water systems require a 100 Foot Sanitary Control Area with no potential source of contamination in that area. Written notification will be sent to inform you if the site is approvable or if it is not approvable.

Step 5: Water Testing

The well needs to have a complete Inorganic Chemical (IOC) test and a satisfactory bacteria test performed by a Department of Ecology certified drinking water lab; a link to Ecology's lab page is provided on the website. Other testing maybe required depending on the history of the site being used for the well. A pump test needs to be performed to determine the quantity of water available from the well. Information regarding IOC tests and correct pump test procedures are available on the webpage in the development section.

A professional engineer is required to design and submit plans to the Washington State Department of Health if any of the following applies:

- Using a variable speed pump
- Providing fire flow

- **Has special hydraulic considerations**
- **Atmospheric storage with the bottom of the tank below ground surface**
- **Serve 10 or more connections**

A list of engineers that have submitted plans to DOH in the past is on our website.

Step 6: Water System Design & Plan Submittal

The water system needs to have designs submitted according to the Group B Design Workbook. The Group B Water System Design Guidelines is available to help with designing of the water system. Both of these documents are available on our website. Someone should develop the design that has previous experience with developing water systems. The design needs to be submitted to the Health Department along with the plan review fee. Upon approval of the plans for the water system, a written letter will be sent to you notifying of the approval of the design. The Group B Design Workbook includes a checklist to help you with tracking items that need to be completed for design approval.

Step 7: Final Inspection & Approval

The water system needs to then be built according to the approved designs and a construction report will need to be signed verifying the system has been built according to plans. After completion a final inspection needs to be scheduled with the Health Department to verify construction according to the approved plans and the department will then issue final approval for the water system provided it is approvable.

Step 8: Routine Monitoring

After final approval of the system, ongoing sampling is required at a minimum of 1 bacteria sample per year and a nitrate sample every three years to maintain compliance (nitrate sampling can be reduced to once every five years if certain criteria are met). The Health Department may require increased monitoring.

Step 9: Annual Operating Permit (See Current Fee Schedule)

An annual operating permit is required for all group B water systems in Cowlitz County. The annual operating permit fee may change yearly, please see fee schedule for current amount.

Step 10: Satellite Management Agency (SMA)

All new Group B water systems are required to contract with a Satellite Management Agency to provide ongoing management for the water system. A list of Satellite Management Agencies approved for Cowlitz County is on the webpage in the Development section. Prices and service may vary from SMA to SMA, please contact multiple SMA's to discuss service.