



## ABANDONMENT OF WELLS

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PEI Enhanced  
Environmental  
Farm Plan

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### Background

Abandoned water wells, if left open or if insufficiently covered or filled, can be a potential source of groundwater contamination. In addition, wells dug by hand pose a potential safety hazard to the public, livestock and wildlife. The abandonment of wells on Prince Edward Island falls under Water Well Regulations under the Environmental Protection Act. Anyone that has an unused well on their property must have the well filled by a well contractor within 30 days of surrendering the use of the well or of discovering the unused well. The methods described below are methods approved by the Department of Environment for the abandonment of water wells as required by section 12 of the regulations. Drilled wells must be abandoned by a licensed well contractor.

### Drilled wells

All obstructions in the well must be removed prior to filling the well. The well should then be filled with alternating layers of bentonite or cement and clean fill (clay till or sand). The bottom 3 m (10 feet) of the bore hole must be filled with the bentonite or cement. The thickness of the individual layers of bentonite

shall be not less than 0.3 m (1 foot) thick. The thickness of clean fill layers shall not exceed 1.5 m (5 feet).

This plugging procedure is intended to prevent the vertical movement of contamination down the well bore hole. In addition, if the portion of the casing which is above ground becomes an eyesore or a safety concern, it can be cut off below the ground surface.

### Dug wells

Any obstructions in the well (piping, pump, wooden material, etc.) must be removed prior to the plugging of the well. The well shall be filled to within 1 m (3 feet) of the ground surface with a mixture of sandstone and clean fill material. A minimum 0.15 m (6 inches) thick layer of a low permeability material such as bentonite or compacted clay must be installed within 1 m (3 feet) of the ground surface to prevent the entry of surface water to the water table. The surface area of the top of the well must be covered with topsoil and graded in a manner that will allow drainage away from the well.

### References:

1. PEI Department of Environment, Environmental Protection Act – Water Well Regulations, Updated 2003