

# CAPPING AND WELL ABANDONMENT MANUAL FOR DEVELOPERS AND WELL OWNERS IN METRO WATER SERVICE AREAS

## Purpose and Goals

An open well or improperly decommissioned (abandoned) well can serve as a conduit for allowing surface water runoff containing any unwanted toxins and pollutants to directly enter the groundwater supply. This concern is especially critical in new residential, commercial and industrial developments near public supply wells.

Existing state rules mandate registered and unregistered wells located in an area that will be impacted by new development are to be properly capped or decommissioned to ensure the protection of groundwater quality and public health. The enforcement of these requirements is the responsibility of the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). ADWR calls decommissioning of a well “abandonment.”

The purpose of this guidance manual is to assist Developers and Well Owners with simple procedures for the capping or abandonment of wells within the Metropolitan Domestic Water Improvement District (Metro Water) service areas.

This manual is one component of Metro Water’s wellhead protection program and serves as an educational resource guide to help well owners and developers and contractors remain in compliance with the ADWR rules and regulations.

## State Regulatory Requirements

**CAPPING WELLS:** Public and private well owners shall comply with ADWR rule R12-15-822 (see Attachment A and “Notice of Well Capping” form), and file the attached form with the ADWR. The person capping the well does not have to be a licensed drilling contractor or single well licensee. However, by signing the attached form this person is held legally responsible for making sure that the cap is air tight and tamper resistant.

**ABANDONING (CLOSURE) WELLS:** Public and private well owners shall comply with ADWR rule R12-15-816 (see attachment B and “Notice of Well Abandonment” form), and file the attached form with the ADWR. Additionally, a copy of ADWR’s Well Abandonment Handbook is also enclosed.

As stated in R12-15-816, well abandonment must be performed by a licensed drilling contractor or single well licensee. A current list of licensed drilling contractors for the Tucson/Pima County area has been attached (see Attachment C). For drillers outside of Pima County, review the ADWR web site at [www.water.az.gov/adwr/content/driller](http://www.water.az.gov/adwr/content/driller).

## State Contact

Dave Christiana is the ADWR contact. He can assist with questions or problems on well capping and well abandonment. His phone number is (602) 771-8527.

## Metro Water Procedures

Metro Water takes five precautionary steps to help prevent improper capping or closure of well.

STEP	DESCRIPTION
1	Subsequent to development plans being submitted to Metro Water, staff reviews the property by using aerial photographs on which state registered wells have been previously plotted. As a precautionary measure, a field inspection is made by Metro's Water Sustainability staff with the property owner's permission to locate any unregistered wells or to confirm the location of registered wells potentially affected by the planned development. Copies of Metro Water's Capping and Closure Manual are mailed or given directly to the Developer.
2	The results of this review and inspection are provided to Metro Water's Development Supervisor who notifies the Developer if there is a need to include the well on the Development's water improvement plans.
3	The Developer has the well location surveyed and drafted onto the plans citing the applicable ADWR regulations (for either well capping or abandonment), the state registration number (if registered), as well as identifying the legal location.
4	Metro Water's (Hydrogeologist) informs the Arizona Department of Water Resources of the planned well capping or abandonment.
5	The Developer or contractor notifies Metro Water's Inspection staff of the capping/closure date and he/she observes the work. When the well has been properly capped or closed it is reported to the ADWR and a copy of the completed state form is provided to Metro Water.

### Responsibilities

In either case, the well must be capped or abandoned by the Developer prior to Metro Water's release of assurances and acceptance of the water improvement plans. **Additionally, if the well is not abandoned, the owner must consent to the drilling and operation of a well by Metro Water now or at any time in the future, which may impact the owner's well. (Attachment D).**

Metro Water's Development Supervisor is responsible for supervising all inspections. The District's Hydrogeologist coordinates abandonment observations with Metro Water's Water Line Construction Inspector.

The Developer is responsible for making sure that **ALL** contacts with the participating agencies have been made and

all state forms have been filed with the appropriate agencies. The Developer shall also make sure that their contractor(s) are educated about these requirements.

### Metro Water Contacts

For questions on water system development plan requirements or sending faxes (575-8454) of abandonment permits, contact Timothy Dinkel, Development Supervisor ([tdinkel@metrowater.com](mailto:tdinkel@metrowater.com)) or 575-8100.

The point of contact for questions on well capping and abandonment is Gary Burchard, Hydrogeologist at 575-8100 or [gburchard@metrowater.com](mailto:gburchard@metrowater.com).

Eric Goodwill, Water Line Construction Inspector will observe the capping and abandonment observations of the well.