

## Well Information & Other Subject

### California Well Standards

Until 1990, the California Water Well Standards were found in Department of Water Resources Bulletin 74-81 and the Cathodic Protection Well Standards in Bulletin 74-1. In 1990, the Department published Bulletin 74-90 as a supplement to Bulletin 74-81 and as a replacement for parts of the Water Well Standards in Bulletin 74-81. Also, Bulletin 74-90 replaced Bulletin 74-1 for Cathodic Protection Well Standards and added a new section on Monitoring Well Standards. Therefore, it has been necessary to have both bulletins for the complete Water Well Standards. Readers have found that flipping back and forth between the two documents is tedious and confusing.

To make the Well Standards easier to use and more widely available, the Southern Region has combined the contents of Bulletins 74-81 and 74-90, integrated the Water Well Standards, and made them available on this web site.

Because the wording and formatting are not always consistent in the two bulletins, some modifications were made. Other modifications were made to take advantage of Internet features such as hyperlinks.

#### Modifications include:

- "Part" used in Bulletin 74-81 is equivalent to "Subsection" in Bulletin 74-90; Subsection is used in this web version of the Well Standards.
- References to specific page numbers in the bulletins have been deleted.
- Typos found in the bulletins have been corrected.
- Equivalent metric units found in Bulletin 74-81 have been deleted.
- Footnotes found in the text have been linked to small pop-up windows; whereas footnotes in tables are found at the bottom of the tables.
- Minor rewording has been made.
- The front matter found in the bulletins has been deleted.
- The two-word spelling of "ground water" found in the bulletins has been changed to one word, which is the current Department style.



#### [California Well Standards Table of Contents](#)

The full California Water Well Standards are not contained within one document. To make the Well Standards easier to use and more widely available, the contents of Bulletins 74-81 and 74-90 were combined, the Water Well Standards were integrated, and made available on this web site.

#### [California Laws for Wells](#) - PDF 68KB

This booklet contains California State statutes that relate directly to the construction, alteration, maintenance, and destruction of water wells, monitoring wells, cathodic protection wells, and geothermal heat exchange wells (March 2003).

#### [Bulletin 74-90: California Well Standards](#) - PDF 21.32MB

This bulletin is a supplement to DWR Bulletin 74-81, Water Well Standards: State of California, December 1981. Standards in Bulletin 74-81 and this bulletin are minimum requirements for construction, alteration, maintenance, and destruction of water wells, monitoring wells, and cathodic protection wells in California (June 1991).

#### [Bulletin 74-81: Water Well Standards - State of California](#) - PDF 21.70MB

This report was prepared by the Department of Water Resources in fulfillment of its responsibilities under the provisions of Section 231 of the Water Code, and in cooperation with the State Department of Health Services (December 1981).

#### [Geothermal Heat Exchange Wells - Draft Well Standards](#), April 1999 - PDF 174KB

#### [Water Facts 5. California Well Standards Questions and Answers. \(June 1992\)](#) - PDF 54KB

Water Facts are short reports on water resources issues of general interest. This Water Facts answers five commonly-asked questions about DWR's well standards.

If posted PDF files are not in an accessible text based format, please request an accessible version via the [Comments and Suggestion](#) page.

If you still need assistance, contact the DWR [Webmaster](#).

---

## Water Well Standards

### CHAPTER II. STANDARDS

#### Part III. Destruction of Wells

##### **Section 20. Purpose of Destruction.**

A well that is no longer useful<sup>Note 21</sup> (including exploration and test holes) must be destroyed in order to: 1. Assure that the groundwater supply is protected and preserved for further use. 2. Eliminate the potential physical hazard.

##### **Section 21. Definition of "Abandoned" Well.**

A well is considered 'abandoned' or permanently inactive if it has not been used for one year, unless the owner demonstrates intention to use the well again. In accordance with Section 115700 of the [California Health and safety Code](#), the well owner shall properly maintain an inactive well as evidence of intention for future use in such a way that the following requirements are met:

- (1) The well shall not allow impairment of the quality of water within the well and groundwater encountered by the well.
- (2) The top of the well or well casing shall be provided with a cover, that is secured by a lock or by other means to prevent its removal without the use of equipment or tools, to prevent unauthorized access, to prevent a safety hazard to humans and animals, and to prevent illegal disposal of wastes in the well. The cover shall be watertight where the top of the well casing or other surface openings to the well are below ground level, such as in a vault or below known levels of flooding. The cover shall be watertight if the well is inactive for more than five consecutive years. A pump or motor, angle drive, or other surface feature of a well, when in compliance with the above provisions, shall suffice as a cover.
- (3) The well shall be marked so as to be easily visible and located, and labeled so as to be easily identified as a well.
- (4) The area surrounding the well shall be kept clear of brush, debris, and waste materials.

If a pump has been temporarily removed for repair or replacement, the well shall not be considered 'abandoned' if the above conditions are met. The well shall be adequately covered to prevent injury to people and animals and to prevent the entrance of foreign material, surface water, pollutants, or contaminants into the well during the pump repair period.

##### **Section 22. General Requirement.**

All "abandoned" wells and exploration or test holes shall be destroyed. The objective of destruction is to restore as nearly as possible those subsurface conditions which existed before the well was constructed taking into account also changes, if any, which have occurred since the time of construction. (For example, an aquifer which may have produced good quality water at one time but which now produces water of inferior quality, such as a coastal aquifer that has been invaded by seawater.)

Destruction of a well shall consist of the complete filling of the well in accordance with the procedures described in [Section 23](#) (following).

---

[Previous Section](#)   [Table of Contents](#)   [Next Section](#)

---