WELL DRILLERS — GUIDE

How well drilling permits work by state

Check the contractor licence, construction paperwork and right to use water separately.

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Ask the right offices

A contractor licence, permission to construct and permission to withdraw water are different questions. Start with the state or provincial well program. Ask which county, health district or groundwater authority also needs to review your project. Describe whether the well serves a home, livestock or irrigation.

Washington example

Ecology says to check with the local permitting agency before filing a Notice of Intent. Its Wells page says a Notice of Intent is not a water right and does not grant permission to use water. The page requires notice before drilling. Ask the driller to show the filing and confirm legal water availability before mobilising. Do not use a construction notice as proof of an irrigation entitlement.

Minnesota example

The Department of Health says a notification and fee must be received before water-supply well construction starts. It distinguishes this from permits for some other wells and borings. The department says wells generally need a licensed contractor, with a stated personal-use exception. Have the department confirm what applies to your property rather than assuming that exception covers hired work.

Texas example

TDLR says a licence is required for drilling a water-related well and for installing its pump. Its page links the licence search and well reporting system. That state licence does not answer every local construction or pumping question. Ask the relevant groundwater district and local office which approvals apply to the proposed use.

Canadian comparison

Ontario says contractors must be licensed and use technicians with the proper licence class. Ask to see both licences. The province also describes siting, construction and reporting rules. Do not apply a US state's process to an Ontario property.

Make a project record

Write down the agency, contact date, application or notification reference, conditions and party responsible. Ask whether changing the location, depth or intended use needs a further review.

Request copies of completed records. These are selected examples checked on 2026-11-10, not a complete legal survey.

Sources

- Washington Department of Ecology, Wells. Fetched 2026-11-10.
- Minnesota Department of Health, Constructing a New Water-Supply Well in Minnesota. Fetched 2026-11-10.
- Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Water Well Drillers and Pump Installers. Fetched 2026-11-10.
- Ontario, Wells on your property. Fetched 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Does this replace local advice?

No. Confirm the work with the responsible agency and a qualified contractor.