WELL DRILLERS — GUIDE

Well inspection for home buyers

Check documents, condition, supply and water quality before making a decision.

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Request the records early

Ask the seller for the well record, location plan, pump details, repair history and complete laboratory reports. Ask whether the property has an unused well. Match records to the actual well identifier and location. A report from a nearby well is not a report for the property.

Ontario's well-owner page explains how to obtain records and why owners should retain them. If a record is missing, ask the relevant agency how to search. Treat missing information as a question to resolve, not evidence that the system is sound.

Define the inspection scope

Ask a qualified well contractor which parts they can inspect without dismantling the system. Request written observations about the cap, visible casing, drainage, pressure equipment and access. EPA lists damaged casing, a missing or broken cap and surface-seal defects as issues to watch for.

Ask whether a pumping assessment is included. Request the method, observations and limitations in writing. A water quality sample and a pumping assessment answer different questions. Neither is a guarantee of future performance.

Order suitable water tests

Use a certified laboratory. CDC and EPA describe annual baseline tests for total coliforms, nitrates, total dissolved solids and pH. Ask the health authority which extra tests are appropriate for the site. Do not rely only on a seller's statement that water tastes good.

Ask the laboratory who should collect the sample, where it should come from and how the report will identify the property. Record whether treatment was operating at collection. Keep the report itself, not only a message saying it passed.

Resolve findings before closing

Send defects to the contractor for a written repair scope. Ask the health department to interpret water results. Discuss deadlines, access and unresolved findings with your property adviser. Do not treat a routine building inspection as a complete well inspection unless its written scope says so.

Keep a handover folder with agency contacts, well record, inspection, sampling details, repair evidence and equipment instructions. Arrange the next test using local guidance. The directory does not certify the property or guarantee a lender will accept a report.

Sources

- US EPA, Protect Your Home’s Water. Fetched 2026-11-10.
- CDC, Guidelines for Testing Well Water. 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.