

WOOD COUNTY ORDINANCE #708
PRIVATE WELL - WATER SYSTEMS ORDINANCE
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708.1 Title

This chapter shall be referred to as the Wood County Private Well - Water Systems Ordinance.

708.2 Authority and Adoption

- (1) This ordinance is adopted under the authority granted to the County by ss. 59.70(6) and 280.21, Wis. Stats., and chs. NR 845 and NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (2) This ordinance is subject to the provisions of ss. 59.70(6) and 280.21, Wis. Stats., and all rules promulgated thereunder regulating private water systems.
- (3) This ordinance may not be more lenient nor more stringent than the rules promulgated pursuant to ch. 280, Wis. Stats.
- (4) Failure to comply with any of the provisions of such regulations shall constitute a violation of this ordinance, actionable according to the penalties provided herein.
- (5) This ordinance applies to the entire county and includes cities, towns, villages and sanitary districts in the county.

708.3 Jurisdiction

The provisions of this ordinance shall apply to all private water systems within Wood County pertinent to well location and well and drillhole filling and sealing.

708.4 Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance is to protect the drinking water and groundwater resources of the county through regulating new private well location and well and drillhole filling and sealing.

708.5 Intent

The intent of this ordinance is to regulate the location of newly constructed private wells, the filling and sealing of wells and drillholes, and the administration and enforcement of this ordinance.

708.6 Effective Date

This ordinance shall be effective upon its adoption by the Wood County Board of Supervisors with an effective date on January 1, 2022.

708.7 Severability and Nonliability

If any section, provision or portion of this ordinance is adjudged unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this ordinance shall not be affected. The county asserts that there is no liability on the part of the County Board of Supervisors, its agencies, or employees for any health hazards or damages that may occur as a result of reliance upon, and compliance with, this ordinance.

708.8 Repeal

All other county ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent or conflicting with this ordinance, to the extent of the inconsistency only, are repealed.

708.9 Definitions

In this ordinance:

- (1) **Administrator** The person who is authorized by the Wood County Board of Supervisors to administer this ordinance, or that person's duly authorized representative(s).
- (2) **Central Office** means the Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater of the Department of Natural Resources, located in Madison, Wisconsin, which functions as the coordinating authority for the statewide water supply program.
- (3) **Community water system** has the meaning designated in s. NR 812.07(24), Wis. Adm. Code.
- (4) **County office staff** means county office personnel trained to answer general private well location and well and drillhole filling and sealing questions.
- (5) **Delegation level** means the program level, as set forth in s. NR 845.05, Wis. Adm. Code, at which a county is authorized to administer and enforce ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (6) **Department** means the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
- (7) **Existing Installations** has the meaning designated in ch. NR 812.07(38), Wis. Adm. Code.
- (8) **Health hazard** means a condition, which constitutes:
 - (a) A violation of ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, regarding the installation, construction, operation or maintenance of a private well.
 - (b) Confirmed bacteriologically unsafe well water quality.
- (9) **Noncommunity water system** means a public water supply system that is not a community water system ch. NR 812.07(64). It serves at least 25 persons per day at least 60 days each year. A noncommunity water system commonly serves a transient population rather than permanent year round residents. (Note:

Examples of a noncommunity water system include those serving schools, motels, restaurants, churches, camp-grounds and parks.)

- (10) **Noncomplying well** means a private water system not in compliance with all provisions of ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (11) **Person** means an individual, corporation, company, association, cooperative, trust, institution, partnership, state, public utility, sanitary district, municipality or federal agency.
- (12) **Personal interest** means having a financial interest in a property or being related by marriage or birth to a person having a financial interest in a property.
- (13) **Primary drinking water standards** means those maximum contaminant levels, which represent minimum public health standards, set forth in ch. NR 809, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (14) **Private water system** means the water collection, storage and treatment facilities and all structures, piping and appurtenances by which water is provided for human consumption by other than community water systems. For the purpose of this ordinance, it includes noncommunity water systems.
- (15) **Private water system ordinance** means a county ordinance, approved by the Department, regulating private water systems at the county's authorized delegation level.
- (16) **Private well** means any drilled, driven point, dug, bored or jetted well, constructed for the purpose of obtaining groundwater for potable use, including wells constructed in special well casing depth areas and noncommunity wells. It does not include springs, or private or public wells that require written plan approval from the Department.
- (17) **Public Water System** has the meaning designated in ch. NR 812.07(80), Wis. Adm. Code.
- (18) **Reconstruction** means modifying the original construction of a private well. It includes but is not limited to deepening, lining, installing or replacing a screen, undermining, hydrofracturing and blasting.
- (19) **Region Office** means the Department office located in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.
- (20) **Variance** means an approval issued by the Department under ch. NR 812.43, Wis. Adm. Code, allowing a private water system to vary from ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, requirements if Department approved conditions are met.
- (21) **Water system** means the water collection, storage, treatment facilities and all structure, piping and appurtenances by which water is provided.

- (22) **Well** means any drillhole or other excavation or opening deeper than it is wide that extends more than 10 feet below the ground surface and is constructed for the purpose of obtaining groundwater.
- (23) **Well and Drillhole Filling and Sealing Inspector** means any county inspector qualified to conduct inspections under Level 5 County responsibilities.
- (24) **Well Construction** means the procedures, methods, materials and equipment used during the construction or reconstruction of a private well.
- (25) **Well Location Inspector** means any county inspector qualified to conduct inspections under Level 1 County responsibilities.
- (26) **Well Location Permit** means the county/state well location permit issued by the county which allows for the construction or reconstruction of a private well.

708.10 County Responsibilities

- (1) Level 1 – Private Well Location Permit. It is the county's responsibility to:
 - (a) Issue permits authorizing the location of new and replacement private wells, including drilled, driven point, dug, bored or jetted wells, or the reconstruction or rehabilitation of existing private wells.
 - (b) Conduct inspections of new, replaced, reconstructed or rehabilitated private well installations for which well location permits were required as soon as possible after the well is constructed.
 - (c) Determine whether the casing height of a permitted well complies with ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, and that there is a cap or seal on the upper terminus of the well.
 - (d) Require upgrading of all inspected private wells that are not in compliance with the minimum private well location distances in ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (2) Level 5 – Well and Drillhole Filling and Sealing. The county shall require the filling and sealing of wells and drillholes in accordance with standards established in s. NR 812.26, Wis. Adm. Code. The County may also require the filling and sealing of a well with water exceeding a primary drinking water standard listed in ch. NR 809, Wis. Adm. Code, or a state health advisory limit issued by the department, after consultation with and approval by the department.

708.11 Inspectors

- (1) Training. All well location inspectors and well and drillhole filling and sealing inspectors shall be trained to adequately conduct inspections commensurate with their authorized delegation level. Well location inspectors and well and drillhole filling and sealing inspectors shall attend initial training sessions and pass an examination related to the delegation level at which the County is authorized. Well location

inspectors and well and drillhole filling and sealing inspectors shall attend continuing education classes conducted by or approved by the Department.

- (2) Well location inspectors and well and drillhole filling and sealing inspectors may not grant variances.
- (3) Well location inspectors and well and drillhole filling and sealing inspectors may not issue permits that result in noncompliance with Wis. Stat. ch. 280, ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, or this ordinance.

708.12 Private Water Systems Administrator

Pursuant to NR 845.06, the Wood County Board of Supervisors created the position of Private Water Systems Administrator for Wood County. The Administrator shall have the power and duty to enforce the provisions of this ordinance and all other ordinances, laws and orders of the county and of the State of Wisconsin which relate to the location of all private water wells and the filling and sealing of all wells and drillholes within the county at the county's authorized delegation level.

- (1) **Qualifications of Administrator.** The Administrator shall be knowledgeable about the principles and practices of private well construction and filling and sealing and pump installation. If the Administrator has a personal interest in the construction or modification of any private well or pump installation subject to the provisions of Wis. Stat. ch. 280, ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, or the county ordinance, the county board shall, after consultation with the department, designate another knowledgeable person to examine the application, to issue the required permits and to make any or all of the necessary inspections.
- (2) **Powers.** The Administrator shall have all the powers necessary to enforce the provisions of this ordinance commensurate with the level or levels of the County's delegated authority including the following:
 - (a) In the performance of his or her duties, the Administrator or an authorized assistant may enter any building or property upon presentation of the proper credentials, during reasonable hours for the purpose of inspecting the private water system and may request the owner or operator to produce the private well location permit required under this ordinance. No person may interfere with the Administrator or authorized assistants in the performance of their duties. Any person interfering shall be in violation of this ordinance and is subject to penalty as provided by this ordinance. If consent to enter a property for inspection purposes is denied, the Administrator may obtain a special inspection warrant under s. 66.0119(2), Wis. Stats.
 - (b) The Administrator shall order any person owning, operating or installing a private water system to fill and seal, modify, repair or replace it in a complying, safe and sanitary condition if the system is not in compliance with the standards established in ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, or the county ordinance.

- (c) The Administrator shall prohibit the use of any new or existing private water system that is found to be installed, constructed, operated or maintained to be a health hazard to the user, neighbors or community.
 - (d) Appoint assistants to aid in processing activities associated with private well location and well and drillhole filling and sealing.
 - (e) Enforce any or all ordinances applicable to private water systems in accordance with Department rules.
 - (f) If the Administrator determines that the location or construction of a private well does not comply with this ordinance or ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, the Administrator shall post, in a conspicuous place upon the site, a suspension of work order demanding cessation of work. The Administrator shall notify the well constructor and property owner in writing of the noncompliance and the nature of the work to be discontinued and corrected, identifying the location and the name of the person issuing the order. It shall be a violation of this ordinance to engage in work at conflict with the terms of an order or to make an unauthorized removal of a posted order. Work may resume on the site only under the direction of the Administrator.
- (3) Duties of Administrator. It shall be the duty of the Administrator to enforce the provisions of this ordinance and perform the following duties commensurate with the level or levels of the county's delegated authority.
- (a) Record all permits, fees, inspections and other official actions, and make an annual report to the County Board of Supervisors.
 - (b) Submit to the Department copies of the processed permits, forms or correspondence. Well location permit applications and corrective, enforcement letters and orders for well location and filling and sealing shall be submitted to the Department within 7 day. Field inspection forms shall be submitted to the Department within 30 days.
 - (c) Upon this ordinance entering into force, submit to the Department all routine county information correspondence not covered in 708.12(3)(b). Thereafter, submit new or significantly updated routine county information correspondence or letters to the department.
 - (d) Submit a summary report to the Department, upon request, by the 60th day following the end of the calendar year. The summary report shall include:
 - (1) Number of permits issued
 - (2) Number of permits denied
 - (3) Number of inspections completed
 - (4) Number of compliance orders issued
 - (5) Number of compliance orders complied with
 - (6) Number of complaints investigated; and
 - (7) Any other information requested by the Department.

- (e) Inspect the location of new private water systems upon completion or during installation using procedures set forth in the uniform private water systems guidance manual and record the inspections on forms provided by the department.
- (f) Require the filling and sealing of wells or drillholes in accordance with standards established in ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (g) Investigate cases of noncompliance with this ordinance, ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, and ch. 280, Wis. Stats., issue orders to abate the noncompliance and submit complaints to the District Attorney or County Corporation Counsel for enforcement.
- (h) Investigate and record all private water system complaints related to Wood County responsibilities in Section 708.10 of this ordinance.
- (i) Refer complaints and cases of noncompliance that are believed to be or known to be beyond the scope of the county's delegation level to the Department.
- (j) Cooperate with all other government units and agencies in the enforcement of all state and local laws and regulations of matters related to this ordinance.
- (k) Assist the Department as specified in ch. NR 845, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (l) Refer variance requests and actions, which require Department approval to the Department.
- (m) May advise owners not to drink or use water from private water systems under the following conditions:
 - (1) Private wells producing bacteriologically-unsafe water as described in the uniform private water systems guidance manual from samples submitted to the state laboratory of hygiene or a laboratory certified by the department of agriculture, trade and consumer protection under ch. ATCP 77.
 - (2) Private wells, except noncommunity, having a level of contamination exceeding a primary drinking water standard specified in ch. NR 809 or a state health advisory limit issued by the department in 2 separate samples submitted to a laboratory certified or registered under s. 299.11, Stats., and ch. NR 149, or the state laboratory of hygiene.
 - (3) Other cases of private well contamination after consultation with and approval by the Department.
- (n) The Administrator, a trained county inspector or county office staff shall be available at the Administrator's office for answering questions

regarding permit applications and for accepting applications for well location permits and well and drillhole filling and sealing for a minimum of four regularly scheduled hours each working day.

708.13 Permits

- (1) No person may install a private water system by a well constructor or pump installer unless the owner of the property on which the private water system is to be installed holds a valid permit issued by the county or has received authorization from the county to proceed with the construction of the well.
- (2) No private water system may be constructed within the jurisdictional limits of the county without the appropriate permit and without being in full compliance with the provisions of this ordinance and all other applicable state and local laws and regulations, ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code. Permit applications for the location of a well shall be made by the property owner or the property owner's designated agent. Permits shall be issued from the office of the Administrator.
- (3) The well location permit application shall be on forms provided by the Administrator.
- (4) Well location permit applications shall be signed by the property owner or the property owner's designated agent. Well location permit applications shall be submitted to the Administrator at least 2 working days prior to construction or installation if the owner or well constructor is interested in receiving information about potential contamination sources such as landfills; underground storage tanks; primary and replacement on-site sewage disposal system areas on the development site and on adjacent properties; and special casing areas. Where a well location permit application is submitted less than 2 working days prior to construction, the well constructor shall be responsible for maintaining full compliance with all provisions of ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code.
- (5) The Administrator shall assist applicants in preparing applications and approve, disapprove or notify an applicant of the need to seek a variance or special approval from the Department or return the permit application due to incompleteness for all private water systems to be constructed or modified in the county within 2 working days following submission of the permit application. The county may reserve final approval or disapproval action of a permit, which requires Department action, until the variance or special approval request has been acted on by the Department.
- (6) The Administrator shall issue written notice to each applicant whose permit application is disapproved. An application shall be disapproved if the well's construction would result in noncompliance with ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, or if a construction variance or special approval request was denied by the Department. Each notice shall:

- (a) State the specific reason(s) for denial.
 - (b) Inform the applicant of the right to request a special approval or a variance from the Department and the procedures for making such a request.
- (7) A permit transfer application shall be submitted to the county when there is a change of well constructor, or property owner after the application is submitted, but before well construction is completed. Failure to submit a transfer application to the county shall invalidate a previously-issued permit. The application shall be on a form made available by the Administrator.
 - (8) As soon as the well location permit is received it shall be displayed conspicuously at the well site during construction for a minimum of 7 days following completion of construction or until the well has been inspected by county staff, whichever occurs first.
 - (9) A well location permit shall be valid for a period of one year or until construction is completed, whichever occurs first. If the permit expires, a new application shall be submitted to the Administrator. Reapplications shall be evaluated so that construction will comply with the provisions of ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, in effect at the time of the reapplication. The Administrator may require additional inspection and fees for reapplications.
 - (10) A well location permit is not required nor shall be issued by the county for private water systems requiring written plan approval from the Department.
 - (11) Any permit issued under this section shall be void if any false or inaccurate statement is made or if any inaccuracy is shown on any application for a permit.
 - (12) No permit may be issued to any property owner or well constructor who is in violation of this ordinance, until the violation has been corrected, unless the permit is to allow correction of the violation.

708.14 Appeals

Persons seeking to appeal decisions of the Administrator under this ordinance shall file written letters of appeal with the Administrator. The Administrator shall place the appeal on the agenda of the Wood County Board of Adjustment (BOA) and the appeal shall be given a due process proceeding. The BOA shall decide whether to uphold, uphold with modifications or reverse the Administrator's decision based upon the terms and intent of this ordinance and of relevant state laws and administrative rules. No appellate decision of the BOA shall have the effect of approving an existing or proposed condition that would violate this ordinance or state law or administrative rule. Appeals that may only be approved by the granting of a variance to ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, shall be referred to the Department pursuant to s. NR 845.09(11)(b), Wis. Adm. Code. The BOA appellate decisions shall be made in writing and shall be filed in the Administrator's office. Appeals of decisions made by authorized agents on the behalf of the Administrator, shall be made first to the Administrator and then be appealable as provided herein.

708.15 Violations.

The Administrator shall investigate violations of the Private Water System Ordinance and ch. NR 812, Wis. Adm. Code, relating to the county's authorized delegation level(s), issue orders to abate the violations and submit orders to the County Corporation Counsel for enforcement.

708.16 Administrator Directives and Orders

- (1) Field Directive. The Administrator, after investigation and a determination that a violation exists, may issue a written field directive. This field directive may consist of a hand written note on an inspection report, or similar paper, identifying the violation that has occurred and assigning a date by which the violation must be corrected, and shall include the inspector's telephone number and office address.
- (2) Formal Directive. A formal letter may be issued, which states the violation, the ordinance (administrative rule or statutory) section violated, the date the violation was noted, the inspector who noted the violation and assigns a date by which the correction must be made.
- (3) Correction Order. Upon discovery, and after documentation of a violation, the Administrator may issue a corrective order. The Administrator may use a stepped enforcement procedure by issuing a directive before an order or may proceed directly to issuing a correction order. An order shall include the following:
 - (a) The location of the violation (site).
 - (b) The names of the parties involved such as the, owner, permittee, well constructor, or pump installer.
 - (c) The section(s) of the ordinance and Wisconsin Administrative Code section(s) violated.
 - (d) The date of inspection of the site where the violation occurred.
 - (e) The name of the person who conducted the inspection which revealed the violation.
 - (f) The date by which the correction(s) must be completed.
 - (g) The name of the person who must be contacted regarding subsequent inspection of the site.
 - (h) A statement that, if the order is not complied with, the Administrator will refer the violation to the District Attorney or County Corporation Counsel with a recommendation to seek injunctive relief and/or forfeitures from the Circuit Court of Wood County. (Orders must be signed by the Administrator of the private water system ordinance.)

- (i) Orders shall be served on the property owner by mail. Where appropriate the Administrator may request the Wood County Sheriff to serve any particular order.
- (j) The Administrator shall report all orders that have not been complied with to the County Corporation Counsel for enforcement.

708.17 Enforcement Actions

- (1) An enforcement action may be brought by the County Corporation Counsel against a person or persons for any of the following violations:
 - (a) Failure to comply with any provision of this ordinance.
 - (b) Failure to comply with any permit specification or requirement.
 - (c) Failure to comply with any directive or order issued by the county Administrator.
 - (d) Resisting, obstructing or interfering with the county Administrator's, or an authorized assistant's, actions undertaken pursuant to this ordinance.
- (2) The County Corporation Counsel may, for any violation, seek:
 - (a) Injunctive relief.
 - (b) Forfeitures of not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$500.00, or both for each violation. (Each day a violation exists is a separate offense.)
- (3) Any person who has the ability to pay any forfeiture entered against him or her under this ordinance but refuses to do so may be confined in the County Jail until such forfeiture is paid, but in no event to exceed thirty (30) days. In determining whether an individual has the ability to pay a forfeiture imposed under this section, all items of income and all assets may be considered regardless of whether or not the income or assets are subject to garnishment, lien or attachment by judgment creditors under the laws of this state.

708.18 Fee Schedule for Permits and Inspections.

The private water systems inspection and permit fees will be established by the Wood County Conservation and Economic Development Committee and may be modified by motion of that committee.