

NEVADA
DIVISION OF
WATER
RESOURCES

A GUIDE TO WATER WELLS IN NEVADA



DO I NEED A WATER RIGHT?

This is easily the most important question to ask yourself when having a water well drilled. You might be thinking, what water wells, or uses of water wells, require a water right? This question is more easily answered by explaining which wells DO NOT require a water right. Per NRS 534.180, domestic water wells do not require a water right if the water usage does not exceed 2 acre -feet per year.

So, what is a domestic well and what is domestic use? “Domestic use” or “domestic purposes” extends to culinary and household purposes directly related to:

1. A single -family dwelling;
2. An accessory dwelling unit for a single -family dwelling if provided for in an applicable local ordinance; and
3. Regular living uses, such as watering a lawn and providing for a pet.

However, the definition does not include the irrigating of hemp or any other crop outside the bounds of a personal garden or the supplying of water to an office or home operated business.

If your water use does not fit within the above definition, you should anticipate needing a water right.

IMPORTANT STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

NRS 533 – Adjudication of Vested Water Rights;
Appropriation of Public Waters

NRS 534 – Underground Water and Wells

NAC 534 – Regulations for Water Well and Related Drilling

THE PROCESS

For the water well owner, the process begins and ends with a phone call to a licensed Nevada well driller. If there is no water right involved, the well driller will usually take it from there. There is little more legwork required for water wells that have or need a water right.

For domestic wells –and pluggings in general –the process is as follows:

- Contact a licensed Nevada well driller
- The well driller will submit a Notice of Intent with the Nevada Division of Water Resources . The Notice of Intent lists important information, such as owner, location, type of well, size of well, and well driller is responsible for the project.
- After the Notice of Intent is reviewed and approved, the well driller will be free to complete the project.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Do I need to have a well driller's license to drill my own water well?

Answer: Yes. Every water well drilled in the State of Nevada must be drilled by a licensed Nevada well driller pursuant to NRS 534.160.

Q: What is the purpose of a water right relinquishment?

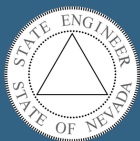
Answer: A “relinquishment” of a water right is for the purpose of offsetting the water withdrawn from a domestic well to a home, or for the dedication of water to newly created lots.

Q: Can I get a domestic water well drilled if I am in the area of a municipality?

Answer: It depends. If you are in a municipality’s service area, the State Engineer requires a letter from the municipality stating the distance the parcel is from water lines and whether they require you to hook-up to the municipal water system.

Q: Can I get a domestic water well drilled if my lot is smaller than an acre?

Answer: It depends. All domestic water wells drilled on a parcel less than an acre are required to get approval from the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health. This is to ensure the water well is drilled a sufficient distance from a septic system.



Nevada Division of Water Resources



Elko Office

1250 Lamoille Hwy, Suite 1047
Elko, NV 89801
Office Phone: (775) 753-3553
Office Fax: (775) 753-9483

Carson City Office (Main Office)

901 S. Stewart St., Suite 2002
Carson City, NV 89701
Office Phone: (775) 684-2800
Office Fax: (775) 684-2811

Las Vegas Office

400 Shadow Lane, Suite 201
Las Vegas, NV 89106
Office Phone: (702) 486-2770
Office Fax: (702) 486-2781