


# Working towards a Water Strategy for New Brunswick:

## Drinking Water



### New Brunswick Today

The Province of New Brunswick has the everyday responsibility of providing safe drinking water to the public while municipalities usually oversee the regular operation of their treatment facilities.

Health Canada has developed the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* in partnership with the provinces and territories. These guidelines are the basis for establishing drinking water quality requirements for all Canadians.

### Public Water Supply and Treatment

Public drinking water supplies have three parts:

- source water
- drinking water treatment system
- distribution system

Managing drinking water sources is important in order to identify potential hazards and reduce or eliminate the risk of contamination.

In cities, towns and some villages, a public or municipal water system is used to bring clean water to everyone. Source water may come from groundwater or surface water which is pumped to a water treatment plant where it is made safe for drinking. In areas outside of the municipal water systems, private water wells are used.

There are approximately 100,000 domestic water wells in New Brunswick.

Municipally and provincially owned and operated water systems are required to sample their water according to the standards outlined in the *Clean Water Act*.

### Private Water Supply and Treatment

Private well owners are responsible for ensuring that their wells are constructed to provincial standards and for testing their water regularly.

It is important for private well owners to ask any person offering to test their water if they have national certification with the *Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation* or the Standards Council of Canada.

For information on where you can have your water well analyzed, please visit:

<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/env/pdf/Water-Eau/WhereWellWaterTestedNB.pdf>

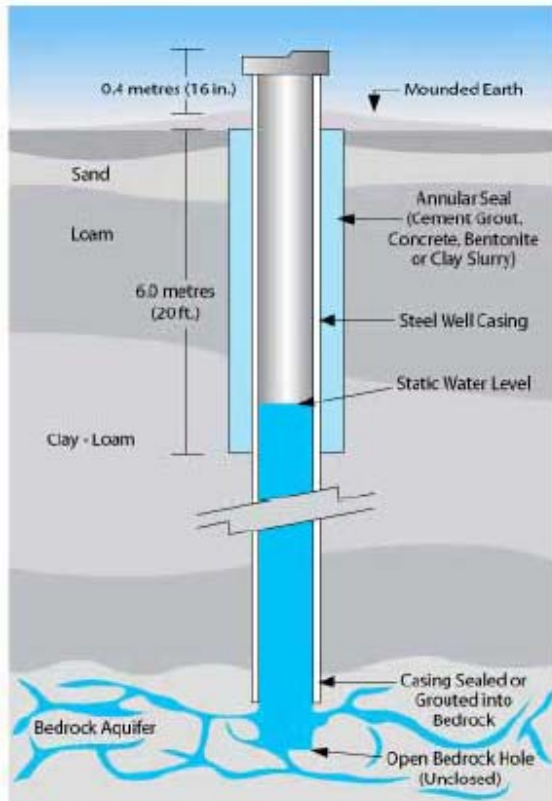


Diagram: Drilled well in bedrock aquifer

## Salt Water in Wells

Road salt, water softeners, natural underground salt deposits, pollution from septic systems as well as salt water intrusion can be causes for elevated salt levels in drinking water. Increased levels of salt can interfere with taste and cause damage to household plumbing. For more information, please visit:

<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/env/pdf/Water-Eau/SaltPrivateDrinkingWaterWells.pdf>

## Well Drilling

Drilled wells consist of a hole bored into the ground, with the upper part lined with casing. The casing helps prevent surface or subsurface contaminants

from entering the water supply. Domestic wells are usually between 100-200 feet in depth and 6 inches in diameter.

If there are drilled wells on your property which are not being used or maintained, they are required to be properly abandoned in a manner approved by the Department of Environment and Local Government. These wells may be a way for groundwater to become contaminated or may be a safety hazard.

When a well is drilled, deepened or repaired, the homeowner receives a blue pre-paid testing voucher from the well contractor. The voucher covers the cost of inorganic chemistry and microbiological testing. Homeowners who have received a voucher are strongly encouraged to have the quality of their water analyzed prior to drinking it by redeeming their voucher.

## Water Well Contractor Permit

All new well construction, deepening of existing wells and well abandonment must be carried out by a licensed water well contractor and licensed well driller.

Water well contractors and drillers must obtain a license each year from the department and well drillers are required to provide a detailed driller's report to the homeowner and the department once the well is complete.

Water well contractors and drillers are responsible for ensuring that any new water well to be constructed meets the

setbacks and construction standards as outlined in the *Water Well Regulation*.

Contractors must work with geologic conditions as they exist and cannot guarantee quantity or quality of water. Low yield and poor water quality may be due to natural conditions in the area.

Many New Brunswickers depend on drilled, dug, or spring-fed domestic wells for drinking water, along with other household uses, and so it's important to know what you can do to ensure the safety of your well water supply. To learn more about what you can do at home, please visit:

<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/elg/environment/content/water.html>

For more information on Drinking Water contact:

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