



Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
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Headed Out To The Country For Dove Season? Keep An Eye Out For Abandoned Or Deteriorated Water Wells

AUSTIN – Texas hunters headed out for dove season are asked to watch for abandoned or deteriorated water wells, and to report any they find to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

With as many as 150,000 abandoned or deteriorated water wells in Texas, chances are that hunters could spot these potential safety hazards that also contribute to groundwater pollution. Abandoned or deteriorated water wells can contaminate groundwater by providing a direct conduit for chemicals and

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TDLR Customer Service | (512) 463-6599 | Toll-Free (in Texas) | (800) 803-9202 | Relay Texas-TDD: (800) 735-2989

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other surface contaminants, such as animal waste and pesticides, to directly enter aquifers. Uncapped wells also present a physical danger to humans and animals who can be severely injured or killed when they fall partially or completely into the well.

What does an abandoned or deteriorated water well look like? There could be a plastic, steel, brick or concrete casing (pipe) that extends above ground, or there could be a hole in the ground with no apparent bottom. Some abandoned wells have concrete or brick casing extending above ground or a windmill with missing blades. Abandoned or deteriorated well casings or pipes may be cut off at ground level, posing an additional threat.

- Wells are “abandoned” when they are not in use, as defined by Texas Occupations Code, [Section 1901.255](#).
- A “deteriorated” well is a well that is causing or likely to cause pollution of any water in the state, including groundwater.

If you’re aware of abandoned or deteriorated wells, please report them to TDLR: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/abwells/default.aspx>. When filing the report, please include an address or GPS Coordinates and any photos or video of the well, if possible.

To avoid problems related to a water well that’s no longer in use, landowners should install a locking well cap or sanitary well seal – not just a cover over the well – to prevent unauthorized use or entry into the well. Septic systems should be pumped and inspected as often as recommended by the local health department. Care should be taken when mowing or working near the well.

Landowners are responsible for abandoned or deteriorated water wells on their property, and once they’re aware of an abandoned well on their property, they must plug it within 180 days. Landowners can plug the well themselves (in compliance with Title 16, Texas Administrative Code, Section [\(76.104 Capping and Plugging Wells Standards\)](#) or hire a well driller or pump installer licensed by TDLR to plug the well or bring the well into compliance.

If a landowner chooses to plug the well themselves, they are required to plug the well in accordance with TDLR’s well plugging specifications (<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/wwd/wwdspecs.htm>) and submit a State of Texas Plugging Report to TDLR within 30 days from the date the well was plugged.

Resources:

- Helpful guide to plugging wells: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/publications/rg/landowners-guide-to-plugging-abandoned-water-wells-rg-347.pdf>

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- Check whether a water well driller or pump installer is licensed: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/LicenseSearch/>.
- Water Well Drillers Law, Plugging Water Well: Texas Occupations Code, [Section 1901.255](#).
- Water Well Drillers and Pump Installers Administrative Rules, Technical Requirements—Standards for Capping and Plugging of Wells and Plugging Wells that Penetrate Injurious Water Zones: Title 16, Texas Administrative Code, [Section 76.104](#).

About TDLR

TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 37 business and occupational licensing programs with almost 1,000,000 licensees across the state.

Visit TDLR's [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

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