

Do You Have an Abandoned Well?

VILLAGE OF VICKSBURG WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAM

UNPLUGGED ABANDONED WELLS ARE A SAFETY, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT!

They are a safety hazard. Each year the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) receives reports of people, mostly children, falling into old wells. Injury or death can result.

They pose a health concern by acting as conduits for contaminants to move from the surface, through the earth's protective formations, into deeper aquifers. Drinking water contamination has been caused by abandoned wells. Old wells can cause pesticides and bacteria to mix with groundwater that is used for drinking.

They threaten the environment. Deteriorated well casings or open, uncased boreholes allow movement of water between previously separated aquifers. This can degrade water quality. Abandoned wells have also been used for illegal waste dumping.

Take time to find out if you have an abandoned well on your property. If so, make sure it is properly plugged to protect the health and safety of your family. If you find an unplugged well, please contact the Village office.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE AN ABANDONED WELL?

1. Talk to people with historical knowledge of your property. Long-time area residents or formal property owners are a great place to start.
2. Look for physical signs. These may be:
 - Abandoned wells may be dug wells of large diameter lined with brick or stones. Drilled or driven wells usually have 2"-4" diameter metal casing
 - Windmills or wishing wells
 - Well casing above ground or through concrete floor
 - Circular concrete patch in floor
 - Small outbuildings that may be a former wellhouse
 - Hand pump or faucet in yard
 - Damp, circular depression in yard

– Crock, brick, or stone structures

– Manhole covers

3. Check records with Kalamazoo County Human Services Department – Environmental Health. Local zoning records or building permits may also provide information on the location of the old well.

Groundwater is a finite resource and once contaminated is very costly and time consuming to clean up. In some cases, cleanup is not an option because of the excessive cost and time. The WHPP is designed to help insure the safety of the community's drinking water supply into the future. If you are interest in becoming involved on the Wellhead Protection Committee, please contact the Village office at 649-1919.