



Private Water Systems Course

Lesson 2

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I determine the level of water in my well?

The water level in an individual well can be determined by having a professional water well driller measure it with a water level meter. However, this method will only give the homeowner a snap shot of the current water level in that well and it will need to be repeated any time you want to know the water level. An easier, cheaper, and more convenient way of determining local fluctuations in groundwater levels is to use a web-based system that allows you to access water levels from a group of monitoring wells in Pennsylvania. These wells are monitored by the U.S. Geological Survey and they currently measure wells in every county of the state. This information can be viewed anytime online at http://pa.water.usgs.gov/durplots/well_duration.html.

How is bottled water regulated in Pennsylvania?

While there are many types of bottled water, they can all be defined as water that comes from an approved source, meets all applicable federal and state standards, is sealed in a sanitary container and is sold for human consumption. Approval of a bottled water source is the responsibility of the state where the source is located. About 75% of bottled water comes from approved natural sources such as springs or wells. By law, these sources must be protected from contamination. The remaining 25% of bottled water comes from approved municipal water supplies like those that serve communities.

How can I determine if my toilet is leaking?

A leaking toilet can cause a significant water loss in the home. Toilet leaks can easily be detected by administering a few drops of food coloring into the tank behind the bowl. After approximately five minutes, check the inside of the toilet to see if any of the color has leaked from the tank. You have a leak if you can see any of the food coloring in the toilet. Determining the cause of

the leak is the next step. Usually toilet leaks are caused by a flush valve or flapper valve that is not sitting on the valve seat properly.

Can you tell me about tankless hot water heaters?

For most existing homes, the tankless water heating system is not feasible. Since there is no storage involved, you need a large flow of water through the heater. Water is delivered to many existing homes in $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pipes at a pressure generally ranging from 30-60 psi. For most tankless applications, we would need a larger supply line delivering the water to the house. Furthermore, if heating with natural gas or propane, then a larger supply line delivering the fuel to the heater is needed as well. If heating the water with electricity, then it is quite likely that a larger service panel may be needed to get the necessary amps to the heater. Some of these issues may be minimized to a certain extent by having several tankless systems installed in the house, with each one placed near a major use point of hot water. But, in existing construction, it could be a nightmare to route the water and the fuel lines to each of the locations where a tankless heater is placed. In new construction, it is much easier to recommend a tankless water system. Then it is necessary to recognize that larger supply lines of water and fuel will be needed. Also, it will be easier to locate the tankless systems close to the major use points. The savings with a tankless system accrue because we do not waste heat from the water that is stored in the tank and in the lines.

Prepared by Jim Clark, Extension Educator in McKean County.

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