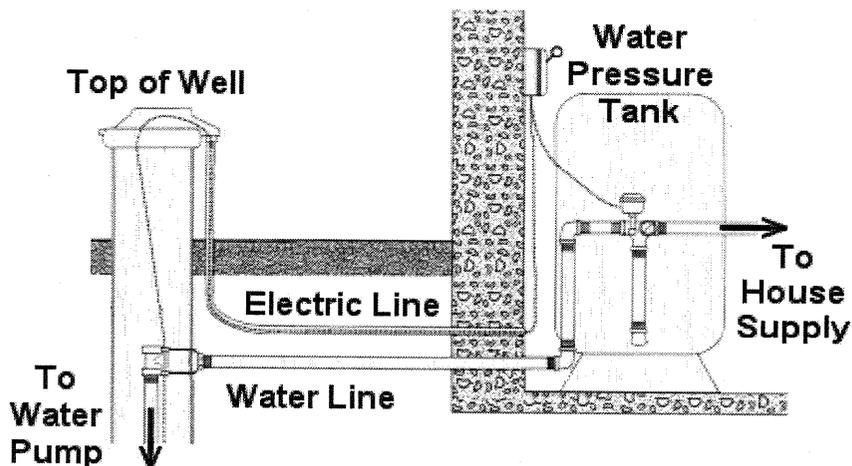


Water Wells

Rural communities such as Boxborough do not have a municipal water supply, and consequently, your water is provided by private well. Water wells tap underground sources of drinkable water found in aquifers and bedrock faults.



Water Well Problems

The safety of any water supply is largely dependent on the construction and maintenance of the water system. Below is a list of common well system problems that can spell trouble if their symptoms are ignored:

Water quality. Water from private systems may contain bacteria, minerals or other impurities that affect its quality. If you are buying a new house, it is important to have the water tested so that you will have a base-line analysis. If you notice a change in taste, odor, or color, you should have the water tested.

Any private water well may be tested in a commercial laboratory for a fee. The Department of Environmental Protection recommends that water be tested for Coliform bacteria levels and Nitrate and Nitrite levels every year. In addition, a base-line analysis should be done every ten years if no defects are found.

Installing a water-conditioning unit can reduce water hardness and iron content. A licensed plumber can install one of these units for you. Make sure the plumber DOES NOT connect the backwash of your water treatment equipment to your septic system. If you encounter other water quality or quantity issues you should contact a reputable well contractor.

Well pump turns on and off continuously when used. A waterlogged pressure tank causes this condition. Draining and re-pressurizing the pressure tank may correct the problem. If you do not know how to do this, you may need to contact a well contractor.

Poor water pressure. There are a number of potential causes for this problem. One of the most common is improper pump setting on the pressure switch. Most pressure switches are set to turn the well pump on at 30 p.s.i. (pounds per square inch) and off at 50 p.s.i. Contact a well contractor to adjust the pressure switch accordingly.

The well pump turns on when water is not in use. This problem almost always means that there is a leak somewhere in the water system. Check the inside plumbing for leaks. If none are found, check outside for wet spots in the yard between the well and the house. Consult with a well contractor if you cannot determine the source of the leak.

Physical defects. Homeowners should periodically inspect their water systems for defects that could affect the safety of their water. If the well casing extends above the ground, make sure the cap fits tightly onto the casing and is in good condition. If the cap is loose, tighten it. If it is damaged, replace it. Check the electrical wiring to the well. Ideally, the wires should be enclosed in metal conduit between the well and ground, and between the basement wall and the pressure switch. If the electrical system appears to be damaged, call a well contractor to repair it immediately.

Where to Get Help

See Yellow Pages for Well Contractors

See Yellow Pages for Water Filtration & Purification Equipment

Littleton Electric Light and Water Department

(978) 486-3104

Nashoba Board of Health

(978) 772-3335