
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Recommended Minimum Water Supply Capacity for Private Wells

One of the most important factors to consider when planning to purchase or build a home is the adequacy of the water supply. The amount of water available to the home can be as important as the quality of the water. How much water is adequate for a private domestic supply is a commonly asked question of DES and the Water Well Board.

Available water supply is a function of both the recovery rate and the storage volume of the well. These two factors contribute to the actual capacity of the supply particularly if the well recovery rate is low. A standard 6-inch diameter drilled well can store 1½ gallons of water per foot of well depth. The actual volume of water in storage will depend on the water level in the well and the pump setting depth.

The Water Well Board suggests that a minimum water supply capacity for domestic internal household use should be at least 600 gallons of water within a two-hour period once each day. This is equivalent to a flow rate of 5 gallons per minute (gpm) for two hours. Some homeowners may find this amount to be less than desirable depending on the size of the family or if outdoor use is a requirement. Water supply capacities less than this amount may be considered a hardship by many homeowners.

In addition, the New Hampshire Water Well Association and the Board recommend a flow rate of 4 gpm for a period of four hours as an optimum water supply capacity for a private domestic supply. This volume is equivalent to 960 gallons of water within a four-hour period and should be adequate for all indoor domestic use as well as a modest amount of outdoor use.

The following tables were developed to assist readers to interpret the recommendations above. In both tables, the overall yield is the sum of the aquifer yield to the well and the available well storage. The tables presume a pump setting of 20 feet above the bottom of the well and a static water level of 20 feet below the ground surface.

Minimum Capacity

The values in Table 1 provide a yield of 600 gallons of water to the home during a period of two hours of pumping.

Table 1. Supply 600 gallons in Two Hours

Sustained Well Yield (GPM)	Required Well Depth (Ft)
0.5	400
1	360
1.5	320
2	280
2.5	240
3	200
3.5	160
4	120
4.5	80
5	---

Optimum Capacity

The values in Table 2 provide a yield of 960 gallons of water to the home during a period of four hours of pumping.

Table 2. Supply 960 gallons in Four Hours

Sustained Well Yield (GPM)	Required Well Depth (Ft)
0.5	600
1	520
1.5	440
2	360
2.5	280
3	200
3.5	120
4	---

Contact a licensed water well contractor or licensed pump installer for information about pumping tests and available options for increasing the capacity of inadequate supplies. Also see fact sheet WD-DWGB-1-16 at

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/dwgb/documents/dwgb-1-16.pdf>

For further information about water supply and wells you may call the Water Well Board at (603) 271-1974 or the DES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at (603) 271-2513 or go to their websites located at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/wwb/index.htm> and <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dwgb/index.htm>, respectively.