

**WELL SERVICES PROGRAM:
CERTIFICATION OF WELL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS**

(PER PROPOSED 310 CMR 46.00 REGULATORY REVISIONS)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Communication for Non-English Speaking Persons

MassDEP provides Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals with access to language translation services as a requirement of A&F Bulletin #16 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This information is available in alternative formats, including Braille. For assistance, please contact Melixza Esenyie, EEA Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, at 617-872-3270. You may also contact Chiquita Cox, Language Access Coordinator of the MassDEP Environmental Justice Office, at Chiquita.Cox2@mass.gov or 781-915-9721. TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370.

Why is MassDEP Transitioning the Well Driller Program to the Well Services Program?¹

MassDEP's Well Driller Program has overseen the business of digging and drilling Wells in the Commonwealth since October 1, 2009, when the responsibility was transferred from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR). MassDEP has been certifying individuals who dig or drill Wells, as MassDCR did when it had responsibility for administering the program. MassDEP's current regulations establish requirements individuals must meet to obtain a Certification, procedures for the Department to issue and periodically renew Certifications, professional responsibilities applicable to all such certified individuals, including reporting requirements following completion of work, and procedures for MassDEP to take appropriate disciplinary action to enforce M.G.L. c. 21G, § 20, and 310 CMR 46.00 in the event of a violation. As of October 2026, there are approximately 230 individuals who have obtained Certification under the program, who collectively submit approximately 3,000 Well Completion Reports for wells installed in the Commonwealth annually.

Massachusetts is one of forty-eight states that has instituted a statewide program to license or certify individuals in the business of digging or drilling Wells. Although the scope of each state's program and the specific requirements vary from state to state, some form of testing and years of experience or comparable criteria are generally used to measure the competence of contractors seeking certification or licensing. The overriding purposes of these programs are to protect each state's groundwater resources from contamination and to protect the health of the citizens who rely on water Wells for drinking water.

MassDEP maintains a database of water supply Wells and non-water supply Wells dug or drilled in the Commonwealth. Under the current regulations, Certified Well Drillers who construct, alter, or decommission wells are required to file Well Completion Reports after

¹ Capitalized terms used herein have the meanings assigned in the proposed regulations, 310 CMR 46.00.

completing work. Using MassDEP's online system, Certified Well Drillers report the well location information, and the Well type, depth and yield, amongst other things. These reports are accessible by the public at no charge.

The Well Services industry, like many other industries, has evolved over time. Historically, a Well Service Business would offer diverse services, including both Well Drilling, Pump Installation, and Well maintenance work. With changing economic trends in the marketplace over time, some contractors limited the Well Services they offered to align with the changes in demand. For instance, in the 1980s, specialized drilling rigs and sampling equipment led some contractors to create environmental services companies constructing groundwater Monitoring Wells. Another niche market for drilling services developed in the late 1990s when Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Wells gained popular acceptance.

The Pump Installation market has evolved as well. Pump installers install, test, maintain and repair water Pump Systems and conduct aquifer tests to assess Well performance. These activities often entail breaking the existing Well cap seal. Any time the Well seal is broken, the potential exists for contamination of the water source. An inadequate seal resulting in impacts to water quality may result in adverse human health impacts and the need for expensive treatment techniques to make the water safe for human consumption. It, therefore, is imperative that pump installers have the requisite knowledge and training in the basic principles of disinfection to eliminate harmful bacteria and viruses and in properly sealing the Well to ensure a safe, potable water supply.

Today's Pump Systems are constructed and maintained by professional installation contractors who require specialized knowledge regarding local geology, hydrogeology, construction techniques, and proper sizing of equipment. The contractors providing Pump Installation do not necessarily offer Well Drilling *per se*. Recognizing that it takes specialized knowledge to properly install and maintain Pump Systems so that groundwater resources and public health are protected, at least 26 states license or register pump installers in addition to well drillers.

Under the current regulations, MassDEP does not certify pump installers. However, MassDEP has considered the changes that have occurred over time in the industry and reviewed other states' certification and licensing programs in a continuing effort to assure that the overriding purposes of Massachusetts' program can be met. As a result, MassDEP is proposing to update the regulations to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the work being performed in the marketplace today to assure that all industry professionals have the requisite training, knowledge, and experience needed.

MassDEP is proposing to establish six distinct classes of Well Service Professionals requiring Certification. These six classes comprise two groups: (i) the Well Drillers group; and (ii) the Pump Installer group. The Well Drillers group includes: (i) Water Well Drillers, (ii) Monitoring Well Drillers, (iii) Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Well Drillers; and (iv) Well Yield Enhancement Technicians. The Pump Installer group includes: (i) Level 1 Pump Installers; and (ii) Level 2 Pump Installers. The Level 1 Pump Installer group includes two subclasses: (i) Level 1A; and (ii) Level 1B. Certification in Level 1B is available to licensed plumbers in the Commonwealth only. This update will assure a high level of training, knowledge and experience by the individuals performing this work. (Descriptions of Levels 1A, 1B, and Level 2 Pump Installers are provided in response to the question immediately below.)

Certification is currently available for a calendar year term. MassDEP is proposing to require Continuing Education as a prerequisite to renewing a Certification to ensure that the individuals

certified to provide Well Services have the most up-to-date knowledge about the materials, products and techniques used in the industry. In comparable contexts, MassDEP's Drinking Water Program has endorsed the concept of proof of continuing education as a prerequisite to renewing Certification (e.g., under the Cross Connection Certification program at 310 CMR 22.22(12), certified Backflow Prevention Device Testers and certified Cross Connection Surveyors must complete continuing education requirements for renewal of their certifications). MassDEP believes that requiring Continuing Education as a prerequisite for renewal of Certification will help maintain a high level of competence and assure that advances in technology and science are applied in the field.

What are the Key Regulatory Updates being Proposed?

The key proposed updates to the regulations include the following:

- MassDEP is proposing to establish six classes for Certification of individuals, including:
 - (i) Water Well Driller;
 - (ii) Monitoring Well Driller;
 - (iii) Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Well Driller;
 - (iv) Well Yield Enhancement Technician;
 - (v) Level 1 Pump Installer; and
 - (vi) Level 2 Pump Installer.
- A Certified Water Well Driller is an individual holding a valid Certification that authorizes the individual to offer or perform Well Drilling and Pump Installation for a Well whose primary purpose is to extract water from underground and other Wells, such as cathodic protection wells, injection wells, Open Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Wells, and ground test wells, excluding Monitoring Wells, Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Wells, and Well Yield Enhancement activities.
- A Certified Monitoring Well Driller is an individual holding a valid Certification that authorizes the individual to install, maintain and decommission Monitoring Wells.
- A Certified Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Well Driller is an individual holding a valid Certification that authorizes the individual to install, maintain and decommission Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Wells, and to perform Pump Installation.
- A Certified Well Yield Enhancement Technician is an individual holding a valid Certification that authorizes the individual to offer or perform Well Yield Enhancement and Pump Installation.
- A Certified Level 1 Pump Installer is an individual holding a valid Certification that authorizes the individual to install and maintain Pump Systems with a pumping capacity less than or equal to 100 gallons per minute (gpm). Level 1A Pump Installers may also determine Well Yield.
- A Certified Level 2 Pump Installer is an individual holding a valid Certification that authorizes the individual to install and maintain Pump Systems over 100 gpm and determine Well Yield.

- For each Certification class, MassDEP proposes to require a test and/or qualifying experience as well as Continuing Education requirements for the annual renewal of an expiring Certification.
- In addition to certifying the individuals who perform work in any of these classes, MassDEP proposes to require Well Service Businesses to identify a “Qualifying Individual” to oversee the provision of the class or classes of Well Services being offered to the public. The Qualifying Individual is a Well Service Professional who holds a valid Certification in the class or classes of Well Service being offered. The Qualifying Individual will be responsible for overseeing field work and completing a Well Completion Report upon completion of assigned work. A Well Service Business may employ or engage more than one Qualifying Individual for each such class.
- MassDEP is proposing that individuals who are certified under the current program would not be required to demonstrate proficiency by documenting how they meet the new test requirements. However, each of these individuals would be required to meet the Continuing Education requirements to renew his or her annual Certification.

What do I need to do to apply for Certification?

MassDEP is proposing that an individual seeking Certification must submit a completed application form to MassDEP and pay the applicable fee. An applicant may apply for Certification in multiple classes simultaneously at no additional fee. No new or changed fees are proposed as part of this draft regulation, and currently applicable fees remain in effect. Fee changes may be proposed in the future as revisions to MassDEP’s fee regulations (310 CMR 4.00).

How would I get a Certification Application Form?

Application forms will be available on MassDEP’s website at <https://www.mass.gov/well-driller-program>.

For additional information about application forms, please submit an e-mail request to program.director-dwp@mass.gov and include *Well Driller Program* in the subject line or call 617-292-5770.

Who can apply for Certification?

MassDEP is proposing that any individual who can demonstrate proficiency in the class of work for which Certification is sought is eligible to apply for Certification. A business cannot be certified.

What qualifications do I need for Certification?

MassDEP is proposing the following requirements for Certification:

Water Well Drillers (authorizes construction and decommissioning of Water Wells only)

1. the equivalent of two years prior experience² drilling Water Wells prior to filing his or her application; and
2. proficiency in Water Well construction as demonstrated by passing an oral or written examination(s) on Well Drilling approved by the Department.

Prior Certification. Any Certified Well Driller possessing a valid Certification issued by the Department as of December 31, 2026, except an individual possessing only a valid Special Certification for Drilling Monitoring Wells, is presumed to satisfy the foregoing requirements.

Monitoring Well Drillers (authorizes construction and decommissioning of Monitoring Wells only)

1. the equivalent of two years prior experience² drilling Monitoring Wells prior to filing his or her application; and
2. proficiency in construction of Monitoring Wells as demonstrated by passing an oral or written examination(s) on Monitoring Well drilling and construction and Borehole decommissioning approved by the Department.

Prior Certification. Any individual possessing a valid Special Certification for Drilling Monitoring Wells issued by the Department as of December 31, 2026 is presumed to satisfy the foregoing requirements.

Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Well Drillers (authorizes construction and decommissioning of Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Wells only)

1. the equivalent of two years prior experience² drilling Closed Loop Ground Source Heat Pump Wells (Closed Loop GSHPW) prior to filing his or her application; and
2. proficiency in Closed Loop GSHPW construction as demonstrated by passing an oral or written examination(s) on Closed Loop GSHPW construction approved by the Department.

Prior Certification. Any Certified Well Driller possessing a valid Certification issued by the Department as of December 31, 2026 except an individual possessing only a valid Special Certification for Drilling Monitoring Wells, is presumed to satisfy the foregoing requirements.

Well Yield Enhancement Technicians (authorizes Well Yield Enhancement only)

1. the equivalent of two years² prior experience in Well Yield Enhancement prior to filing his or her application;
2. proficiency in Well Yield Enhancement as demonstrated by passing an oral or written examination(s) approved by the Department.

Prior Certification. Any Certified Well Driller possessing a valid Certification issued by the Department as of December 31, 2026, except an individual possessing only a valid Special Certification for Drilling Monitoring Wells, is presumed to satisfy the foregoing requirements.

² Experience must be in Massachusetts under Immediate Field Supervision of a certified driller, unless the individual meets the Waiver requirements in the proposed regulatory revisions. The proposed Waiver requirements are similar to those in the current regulations.

Level 1A and 1B Pump Installers

Level 1A Subclass (authorizes work on Pump Systems with a capacity less than or equal to 100 gpm and Well Yield determinations)

1. the equivalent of one year prior Pump Installation experience on Pump Systems with a pumping capacity less than or equal to 100 gallons per minute prior to filing his or her application; or³
2. proficiency in Pump Installation work as demonstrated by passing an oral or written examination(s) on Pump Installation (Level 1) and determining Well Yield approved by the Department.

Prior Certification. Any Certified Well Driller possessing a valid Certification issued by the Department as of December 31, 2026, except an individual possessing only a valid Special Certification for Drilling Monitoring Wells, is presumed to satisfy the foregoing requirements.

Level 1B Subclass (authorizes work on Pump Systems with a capacity less than or equal to 100 gpm and excludes Well Yield determinations)

1. A currently valid license to perform plumbing work issued pursuant to 248 CMR 3.00: *General Provisions Governing the Conduct of Plumbing and Gas Fitting Work Performed in the Commonwealth.*

Level 2 Pump Installers (authorizes work on Pump Systems with a capacity over 100 gpm and Well Yield determinations)

1. the equivalent of one year prior Pump Installation experience on Pump Systems with a pumping capacity greater than 100 gallons per minute prior to filing his or her application; or⁴
2. proficiency in Pump Installation work as demonstrated by passing an oral or written examination(s) on Pump Installation (Level 2) and determining Well Yield approved by the Department.

Prior Certification. Any Certified Well Driller possessing a valid Certification issued by the Department as of December 31, 2026, except an individual possessing only a valid Special Certification for Drilling Monitoring Wells, is presumed to satisfy the foregoing requirements.

How long is Certification valid?

MassDEP is proposing that Certifications are valid for one year and must be renewed on an annual cycle that ends on December 31. Applications may be submitted throughout the year, but regardless of the application date, a Certification will be valid till December 31.

³ MassDEP is also proposing that, effective January 1, 2028, an applicant for initial certification as a Level 1A Pump Installer must meet the examination requirement.

⁴ MassDEP is also proposing that, effective January 1, 2028, an applicant for initial certification as a Level 2 Pump Installer must meet the examination requirement.

How do I renew my Certification?

MassDEP is proposing that you will need to complete a Certification renewal application form and submit it to MassDEP with the applicable fee by December 31 for renewal for the following calendar year.

MassDEP is proposing that each person seeking to renew a Certification will need to document they have met the Continuing Education requirements prior to renewal of Certification.

How much will it cost to renew my Certification?

- **On-time renewal applications** (renew by December 31st): The current fee of \$100 will continue to apply. The Certification renewal fee will be the same regardless of the number of Certification classes held by the Well Services Professional.
- **Late renewal applications:** In addition to the on-time renewal fee, late renewal applicants actively certified in the previous year are required to pay a \$100 late fee. For late applications submitted within two years of the expiration of Certification, the applicant also pays the accumulated amount of past Certification fees due since expiration of Certification. If more than two years have passed since the date of expiration, the applicant is required to file a new initial Certification application.
- Note that fee changes may be proposed in the future as revisions to MassDEP's fee regulations (310 CMR 4.00).

As a currently Certified Well Driller, do I need to pass a certification exam to be recertified after the new regulations are promulgated?

No, currently Certified Well Drillers are not required to pass the exam.

As a currently Certified Well Driller, do I need to satisfy the Continuing Education requirements to renew my Certification after the new regulations are promulgated?

Yes. Certified Well Drillers must complete at least four (4) hours and Certified Pump Installers must complete two (2) hours of continuing education.

As a Certified Well Driller, will I be able to perform work in all six classes?

Perhaps. An individual who holds a valid general MA Well Driller Certificate from the Department under the current regulations will be authorized to continue to perform work in each class upon renewal of Certification. An individual who currently holds a valid MA Monitoring Well Driller Certificate will be authorized to perform work in the Certified Monitoring Well Driller class only. An individual seeking initial Certification is required to satisfy the requirements for Certification in each class in which he or she plans to offer services to the public.

How do I obtain a MA Well Driller certification if I'm currently a certified well driller in another state?

MassDEP is proposing that individuals who have been certified for at least two years in another state with comparable certification requirements and are in good standing may apply for MA certification. If certification requirements are not comparable, applicants who have been certified for at least two years in another state and are in good standing may work for one year under the supervision of a MA Certified Well Driller certified in the well services classification the applicant is seeking before applying for MA certification. Individuals may also apply if they are certified by

the National Ground Water Association (NGWA) as a Certified Well Driller, and they have at least one year additional experience working under the supervision of a MA Certified Well Driller who is certified in the well services classification in which the applicant seeks certification.

Are there exams for each of the new classes?

There are currently exams available for all classes of Certification. Exams are currently offered by the National Ground Water Association (NGWA).

Where can I get information about the National Ground Water Association training programs and exams?

Information on NGWA's training programs and exams, including exam scheduling, can be found on the NGWA website (www.ngwa.org). Exams are administered at the indicated exam centers.

What study guides are available for the NGWA exams?

Study guides and training events are available through the NGWA website at:

https://www.ngwa.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/careers/certification-success-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=9533f79e_4

Will MassDEP provide training opportunities and lists of approved courses that meet the Continuing Education requirements?

Yes. MassDEP will notify individuals holding a Certification by electronic mail of the training opportunities and approved courses available. In addition, if a training opportunity or course is not listed as approved, the Well Driller Program may consider approving it if requested by a person who is subject to Certification. However, MassDEP must approve a training opportunity or course before it is taken to apply to the Continuing Education requirements.

Has MassDEP engaged stakeholders to develop the proposed regulations?

Yes. MassDEP reached out to several stakeholders for comment and recommendations during the development of the proposed regulations. MassDEP established a Technical Advisory Committee for the purpose of advising the Department on regulation reform when the Well Driller Program was transferred from MassDCR to MassDEP in October 2009. Members of this Committee included representatives of associations representing the well drilling and water supply industries (Massachusetts Ground Water Association, New England Water Works Association, Massachusetts Water Works Association), the geothermal industry, the Massachusetts Geological Survey, public water suppliers, water supply consultants, and municipal boards of health. In addition, the Board of State Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters provided comments. More recently, in March of 2024, MassDEP presented on the proposed regulations at the Massachusetts Ground Water Association (MGWA) annual meeting at the New England Water Works Association Expo in Marlborough, MA. Approximately 30 well service professionals attended and provided helpful feedback. MassDEP also attends the monthly MGWA board meetings to stay abreast of any concerns that the board has.

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