

**For more information:**

Online visit: [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wells/wellhome.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wells/wellhome.html) – click on wells

See Chapter 173-160 WAC

To leave a recorded message,  
call 1-800-468-0261.

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# Request for Variance

## Problems and Solutions

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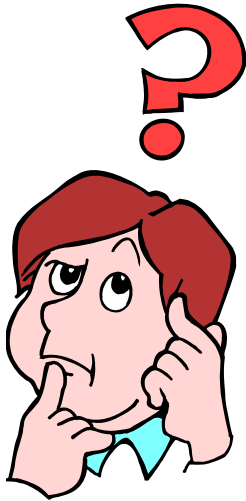
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## APPLYING FOR A VARIANCE

### Getting pre-approved permission to use a different method of well construction.

You plan to construct a well, but you may be asking “What if I can’t meet the minimum construction standards for my well? What if I need to locate my well near a source of contamination? Can I come up with a different solution to the state regulations?”

It is the responsibility of both the property owner and the driller to follow the well drilling code. In some cases, special conditions require that other methods be explored to construct the well. In those instances, a person may apply to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) for a **variance**. A variance must be requested **before drilling a well**.



*A variance is pre-approved written permission to use a different method of well construction.*

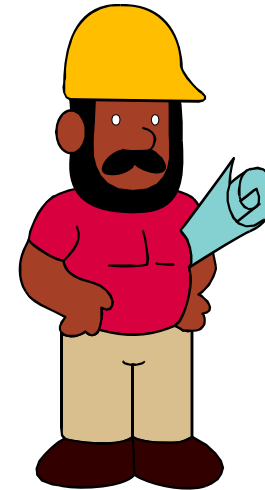
We will evaluate your variance request. A variance may be approved if a plan is offered that assures satisfactory protection to public health and the environment. If we deny your variance, you may appeal our decision to the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB).

### What are the most common types of variance requests?

Typically, Ecology is asked to approve locating an individual domestic well less than 100 feet from a septic drainfield, or closer than 1,000 feet to a landfill. Another typical variance request is to allow a different decommissioning method.

### How do I request a variance?

Each variance request is handled on a case-by-case basis. The specific information needed is dependent on the type of variance requested. In some cases, we may not be allowed to grant a variance, in spite of the circumstances. Therefore, you should contact the regional Well Drilling Coordinator at our regional office before you start construction of your well. Variance requests are typically handled through a licensed driller.



For more information on locating your well and how to apply for a variance, see Chapter 173-160 WAC.