



Planning and Building Department Permit Requirements for New Agricultural Wells in the Rural Areas of Unincorporated San Mateo County

This handout is meant for people who would like to drill a new well for agricultural use only.

If it is for mixed agricultural and domestic use, see the handout titled “Permit Process for New Domestic Well in Unincorporated San Mateo County.”

For new agricultural wells in unincorporated San Mateo County, a well drilling permit from the Environmental Health Department is always required. This handout describes the Planning and Building Department requirements.

What permits do I need?

Planning Permit

To determine if a Planning permit is required, you will need to know the zoning of your property.

1. If your property is outside of the Coastal Zone and zoned Resource Management (RM) or Timber Preserve Zone (TPZ), then agricultural wells are a permitted use and no Planning permits are needed unless grading, road construction, or the removal of significant vegetation is required to drill the well or test well. If that is the case, contact the Planning and Building Department regarding the potential need for grading, tree removal, and/or land clearing permits.
2. If your property is in the Coastal Zone and zoned RM-CZ, PAD or TPZ-CZ, then you will need to apply for a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) or a Coastal Development Permit Exemption (CDX).
 - a. If the well is located in the Agricultural Exclusion Area, which includes most properties located east of Highway 1, outside of the Pillar Point groundwater basin and not within any hazardous area designated on LCP Hazard Maps, then you can apply for a CDX*.
 - b. If your property is not located in the Agricultural Exclusion Area, or in some way does not meet the requirements for the exemption, then a CDP will be needed.
 - c. If grading, road construction, or the removal of significant vegetation is required to drill the well, contact the Planning and Building Department regarding the potential need for coastal development, grading, tree removal, and/or land clearing permits.

After determining what will be required for the Planning Department, contact Environmental Health to discuss your project.

**If you have any questions about the zoning of your property, or the location of the agriculture exclusion area and mapped hazardous areas, please contact the Planning and Building Department or the Agricultural Ombudsman.*

What you'll need to submit:

Before submitting your permit, contact the Planning Department to see if there are any additional requirements for your project.

Coastal Development Permit Exemption (CDX):

- Coastal Development Permit Exemption Application Form
- 5 sets of a location map and site plans that show proposed well site, location of existing water source, type and location of existing or proposed agricultural production activities that necessitate the well, any new infrastructure, vegetation removal, or landform alterations (i.e. for access road) required to construct and operate the well, and location of any sensitive habitats and water courses.

Coastal Development Permit (CDP):

- Planning Permit Application form
- Coastal Development Permit companion page
- Proof that you own the property, or evidence that owner agrees with project
- Environmental Disclosure Form
- 5 sets of a location map and site plans that show proposed well site, location of existing water source, type and location of agricultural production activities that necessitate the well, and any new infrastructure, vegetation removal, or landform alterations required to construct and operate the well.
- If the well is located within 100 feet of a stream or wetland, or otherwise has the potential to impact riparian or aquatic habitats, a technical analysis of the well's potential impact on riparian and wetland resources, prepared by a qualified professional.
- Other documents as needed (e.g., survey)

Building Permit

Once you have obtained any necessary Planning permits, you must submit a Building Permit application to the Planning and Building Department for the electrical and mechanical components of the well, as well as Well Drilling Permit application to the Environmental Health Department.