

Water Service Connections

BACKGROUND:

In 2014, the State of California enacted legislation known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which established a framework for sustainable, local groundwater management. SGMA requires groundwater-dependent regions to halt overdraft and bring basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge. This means that the amount of water removed from the groundwater basin cannot be more than what is put back into the basin through the recharge process.

Due to the 2014 SGMA legislation, it has become a priority of the City of Fresno to reduce the number of groundwater wells contributing to chronic lowering of groundwater levels, significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage, and significant and unreasonable degraded water quality, all of which exist in the City of Fresno.

WELL DRILLING PROHIBITION:

Per the Fresno Municipal Code Section 6-402(a), the drilling of new private supply wells within the City's service area is prohibited:

The drilling or digging of wells within the city, except by the City of Fresno, for any other purpose than for furnishing water in whole or in part for refrigeration, air conditioning, or for the purpose of furnishing water to any refrigeration or air-cooling system or unit, or for a drainage well in connection therewith, or for irrigation, or use as a monitoring well, is hereby prohibited.

If a private service well becomes unusable, the City will not issue any permits to repair or deepen the existing well, or to drill a new well. The property will therefore be required to connect to the City's water system.

In order to assist property owners with the costs of connecting to the City's water system, the Fresno City Council has approved a low-interest loan option for single family residential property owners to include the water connection fees, the costs of onsite plumbing to complete the water connection, as well as the costs to destroy the existing well.

EXCEPTIONS TO WELL DRILLING PROHIBITION:

A permit for the drilling of a supply well for domestic, commercial or industrial purposes may be issued for **temporary** use only, under the following conditions:

- 1) City water mains are not in place adjacent to the property involved.
- 2) The City has determined that it is not economically feasible or desirable to extend the city's water mains to serve the property at the time the request for service is made by the owner or lessee.
- 3) The owner or lessee of the property has executed an agreement for the discontinuance of the use of the well and the capping of the same upon notice by the City. Such notice shall be given immediately following installation of water mains adjacent to the property on which the well has been drilled.

PROCESS OF CONNECTION:

The following steps must be completed in order to properly connect a property to the City's water system:

- 1) **Pay connection fees** (*Public Works Engineering*).
To obtain a cost estimate of the connection fees and charges, contact Frank Saburit at (559) 621-8797 or Frank.Saburit@fresno.gov.
- 2) **City installs the water meter box** on the property and **begins service billing** for the property.
- 3) **Obtain appropriate permits** for on-site plumbing (*DARM*) and well destruction (*Public Works Engineering*).

Information about building permits for on-site plumbing can be found on the Planning & Development – Building & Safety (*link to:* <https://www.fresno.gov/darm/building-safety/>) web page or by calling (559) 621-8084 or (559) 621-8082.

To obtain a City of Fresno well destruction permit application, contact Harmanjit Dhaliwal in Public Works, Traffic Engineering at (559) 621-8694 or Harmanjit.Dhaliwal@fresno.gov.

- 4) Complete the work to connect to the water system and destroy the existing well.
- 5) **Obtain final inspection approval** for on-site plumbing (*DARM*) and well destruction (*Department of Public Utilities*).

For on-site plumbing inspections, contact Inspection Services at (559) 621-8116 to schedule an inspection.

LOW-INTEREST FINANCING OPTIONS AVAILABLE:

Payment of water connection fees, private water service line installation, and well destruction charges for existing single-family residences, and existing commercial or industrial development in the former Enterprise Zone, may be deferred by an agreement between the property owner and the City, to pay such costs, up to a maximum loan amount of \$15,000, over a period of not more than 20 years (*Water Connection Agreement, WCA*). – FMC § 6-507(d)

REFERENCES:

Fresno Municipal Code, Section 6-402: Well Drilling Prohibition

Fresno Municipal Code, Section 6-507: Permit to Connect Water Required: Payment of Charges

City of Fresno Ordinance No. 2016-53: An Ordinance of the City of Fresno, California, Amending Section 6-507(d) of the Fresno Municipal Code, Pertaining to Payment of Charges for Public Water Service Connection, Private Water Service Line Installation, and Well Destruction.

City of Fresno Master Fee Schedule