1) General

Index Map/Surface Topography

Surface Casing Types used in Drilled Water Wells

Location of Water Wells

Depth of Existing Water Wells

Depth to Base of Groundwater Protection

Generalized Cross-Section (for terminology only)

Geologic Column

Hydrogeology Map

Cross-Section A - A'

Cross-Section B - B'

Cross-Section C - C'

Bedrock Topography

Bedrock Geology

E-Log Showing Base of Foremost Formation

Relative Permeability

Licensed Water Wells

Estimated Water Well Use Per Section

Water Wells Recommended for Field Verification

2) Surficial Aquifers

a) Surficial Deposits

Thickness of Surficial Deposits

Non-Pumping Water-Level Surface in Surficial Deposits Based on Water Wells Less than 20 Metres Deep

Total Dissolved Solids in Groundwater from Surficial Deposits

Sulfate in Groundwater from Surficial Deposits

Nitrate + Nitrite (as N) in Groundwater from Surficial Deposits

Chloride in Groundwater from Surficial Deposits

Total Hardness in Groundwater from Surficial Deposits

Piper Diagram - Surficial Deposits

Thickness of Sand and Gravel Deposits

Amount of Sand and Gravel in Surficial Deposits

Thickness of Sand and Gravel Aguifer(s)

Water Wells Completed in Surficial Deposits

Apparent Yield for Water Wells Completed in Sand and Gravel Aguifer(s)

Changes in Water Levels in Sand and Gravel Aquifer(s) Based on Water Wells Less than 20 Metres Deep

b) Upper Sand and Gravel

Thickness of Upper Surficial Deposits

Thickness of Upper Sand and Gravel (not all drill holes fully penetrate surficial deposits)

Apparent Yield for Water Wells Completed through Upper Sand and Gravel Aquifer

c) Lower Sand and Gravel

Structure-Contour Map - Top of Lower Surficial Deposits

Depth to Top of Lower Surficial Deposits

Thickness of Lower Surficial Deposits

Thickness of Lower Sand and Gravel (not all drill holes fully penetrate surficial deposits)

Apparent Yield for Water Wells Completed through Lower Sand and Gravel Aguifer

Non-Pumping Water-Level Surface in Lower Sand and Gravel Aquifer



3) Bedrock Aquifers

a) General

Apparent Yield for Water Wells Completed in Upper Bedrock Aquifer(s)

Total Dissolved Solids in Groundwater from Upper Bedrock Aguifer(s)

Sulfate in Groundwater from Upper Bedrock Aguifer(s)

Chloride in Groundwater from Upper Bedrock Aquifer(s)

Fluoride in Groundwater from Upper Bedrock Aquifer(s)

Total Hardness of Groundwater from Upper Bedrock Aquifer(s)

Piper Diagram - Bedrock Aquifers

Recharge/Discharge Areas between Surficial Deposits and Upper Bedrock Aguifer(s)

Non-Pumping Water-Level Surface in Upper Bedrock Aquifer(s)

Changes in Water Levels - Upper Bedrock Aquifer(s)

b) Lower Horseshoe Canyon Formation

Depth to Top of Lower Horseshoe Canyon Formation

Structure-Contour Map - Lower Horseshoe Canyon Formation

Non-Pumping Water-Level Surface - Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aguifer

Apparent Yield for Water Wells Completed through Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aguifer

Total Dissolved Solids in Groundwater from Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aquifer

Sulfate in Groundwater from Lacombe Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aquifer

Chloride in Groundwater from Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aguifer

Fluoride in Groundwater from Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aguifer

Piper Diagram - Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aquifer

Recharge/Discharge Areas between Surficial Deposits and Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aquifer

Changes in Water Levels - Lower Horseshoe Canyon Aguifer

c) Bearpaw Formation

Depth to Top of Bearpaw Formation

Structure-Contour Map - Bearpaw Formation

Non-Pumping Water-Level Surface - Bearpaw Aguifer

Apparent Yield for Water Wells Completed through Bearpaw Aquifer

Total Dissolved Solids in Groundwater from Bearpaw Aquifer

Sulfate in Groundwater from Bearpaw Aquifer

Chloride in Groundwater from Bearpaw Aquifer

Fluoride in Groundwater from Bearpaw Aquifer

Piper Diagram - Bearpaw Aquifer

Recharge/Discharge Areas between Surficial Deposits and Bearpaw Aquifer

Changes in Water Levels - Bearpaw Aquifer

d) Oldman Formation

Depth to Top of Oldman Formation

Structure-Contour Map - Oldman Formation

Non-Pumping Water-Level Surface - Oldman Aquifer

Apparent Yield for Water Wells Completed through Oldman Aquifer

Total Dissolved Solids in Groundwater from Oldman Aquifer

Sulfate in Groundwater from Oldman Aquifer

Chloride in Groundwater from Oldman Aquifer

Fluoride in Groundwater from Oldman Aquifer

Piper Diagram - Oldman Aquifer

Recharge/Discharge Areas between Surficial Deposits and Oldman Aquifer

Changes in Water Levels - Oldman Aguifer

e) Birch Lake Member

Depth to Top of Birch Lake Member

Structure-Contour Map - Birch Lake Member

4) Hydrographs and Observation Water Wells

Hydrograph - AENV Observation Water Wells

Annual Precipitation vs Water Levels in AENV Obs WW No. 157

Annual Precipitation vs Water Levels in AENV Obs WW No. 158

AENV Obs WW No. 157 vs Cooking Lake Water-Level Fluctuations



STRATHCONA COUNTY Appendix C

General Water Well Information

Domestic Water Well Testing			
Purpose and Requirements			
Procedure3			
Site Diagrams			
Surface Details			
Groundwater Discharge Point			
Water-Level Measurements			
Discharge Measurements			
Water Samples			
Water Act - Water (Ministerial) Regulation4			
Water Act – Flowchart5			
Interpretation of Chemical Analysis of Drinking Water6			
Additional Information8			



Domestic Water Well Testing

Purpose and Requirements

The purpose of the testing of domestic water wells is to obtain background data related to:

- 1) the non-pumping water level for the aquifer Has there been any lowering of the level since the last measurement?
- 2) the specific capacity of the water well, which indicates the type of contact the water well has with the aquifer;
- 3) the transmissivity of the aquifer and hence an estimate of the projected long-term yield for the water well;
- 4) the chemical, bacteriological and physical quality of the groundwater from the water well.

The testing procedure involves conducting an aquifer test and collecting of groundwater samples for analysis by an accredited laboratory. The date and time of the testing are to be recorded on all data collection sheets. A sketch showing the location of the water well relative to surrounding features is required. The sketch should answer the question, "If this water well is tested in the future, how will the person doing the testing know this is the water well I tested?"

The water well should be taken out of service as long as possible before the start of the aquifer test, preferably not less than 30 minutes before the start of pumping. The non-pumping water level is to be measured 30, 10, and 5 minutes before the start of pumping and immediately before the start of pumping which is to be designated as time 0 for the test. All water levels must be from the same designated reference, usually the top of the casing. Water levels are to be measured during the pumping interval and during the recovery interval after the pump has been turned off; all water measurements are to be with an accuracy of \pm 0.01 metres.

During the pumping and recovery intervals, the water level is to be measured at the appropriate times. An example of the time schedule for a four-hour test is as follows, measured in minutes after the pump is turned on and again after the pump is turned off:

1,2,3,4,6,8,10,13,16,20,25,32,40,50,64,80,100,120.

For a four-hour test, the reading after 120 minutes of pumping will be the same as the 0 minutes of recovery. Under no circumstance will the recovery interval be less than the pumping interval.

Flow rate during the aquifer test should be measured and recorded with the maximum accuracy possible. Ideally, a water meter with an accuracy of better than $\pm 1\%$ displaying instantaneous and total flow should be used. If a water meter is not available, then the time required to completely fill a container of known volume should be recorded, noting the time to the nearest 0.5 seconds or better. Flow rate should be determined and recorded often to ensure a constant pumping rate.

Groundwater samples should be collected as soon as possible after the start of pumping and within 10 minutes of the end of pumping. Initially only the groundwater samples collected near the end of the pumping interval need to be submitted to the accredited laboratory for analysis. All samples must be properly stored for transportation to the laboratory and, in the case of the bacteriological analysis, there is a maximum time allowed between the time the sample is collected and the time the sample is delivered to the laboratory. The first samples collected are only analyzed if there is a problem or a concern with the first samples submitted to the laboratory.



Procedure

Site Diagrams

These diagrams are a map showing the distance to nearby significant features. This would include things like a corner of a building (house, barn, garage etc.) or the distance to the half-mile or mile fence. The description should allow anyone not familiar with the site to be able to unequivocally identify the water well that was tested. In lieu of a map, UTM coordinates accurate to within five metres would be acceptable. If a hand-held GPS is used, the post-processing correction details must be provided.

Surface Details

The type of surface completion must be noted. This will include such things as a pitless adapter, well pit, pump house, in basement, etc. Also, the reference point used for measuring water levels needs to be noted. This would include top of casing (TOC) XX metres above ground level; well pit lid, XX metres above TOC; TOC in well pit XX metres below ground level.

Groundwater Discharge Point

Where was the flow of groundwater discharge regulated? For example was the discharge through a hydrant downstream from the pressure tank; discharged directly to ground either by connecting directly above the well seal or by pulling the pump up out of the pitless adapter; from a tap on the house downstream from the pressure tank? Also note must be made if any action was taken to ensure the pump would operate continuously during the pumping interval and whether the groundwater was passing through any water-treatment equipment before the discharge point.

Water-Level Measurements

How were the water-level measurements obtained? If obtained using a contact gauge, what type of cable was on the tape, graduated tape or a tape with tags? If a tape with tags, when was the last time the tags were calibrated? If a graduated tape, what is the serial number of the tape and is the tape shorter than its original length (i.e. is any tape missing)?

If water levels are obtained using a transducer and data logger, the serial numbers of both transducer and data logger are needed and a copy of the calibration sheet. The additional information required is the depth the transducer was set and the length of time between when the transducer was installed and when the calibration water level was measured, plus the length of time between the installation of the transducer and the start of the aquifer test. All water levels must be measured at least to the nearest 0.01 metres.

Discharge Measurements

Type of water meter used. This could include such things as a turbine or positive displacement meter. How were the readings obtained from the meter? Were the readings visually noted and recorded or were they recorded using a data logger?

Water Samples

A water sample must be collected between the 4- and 6-minute water-level measurements, whenever there is an observed physical change in the groundwater being pumped, and 10 minutes before the end of the planned pumping interval. Additional water samples must be collected if it is expected that pumping will be terminated before the planned pumping interval.



Water Act - Water (Ministerial) Regulation



PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

WATER ACT

WATER (MINISTERIAL) REGULATION

Alberta Regulation 205/98

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ALBERTA REGULATION 205/98 Water Act WATER (MINISTERIAL) REGULATION

Table of Contents

Interpretation	1
Part 1 Activities	
Approval exemption Approval exemptions subject to Code Notice of section 3 activities	2 3 4
Part 2 Diversions and Transfers	
Licence exemption Temporary diversions subject to Code Section 6 temporary diversion notices Diversion for household purposes prohibited Subdivisions requiring reports Major river basin boundaries Licence purposes Licence expiry dates	5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
Part 3 Notice	
Notice of application, decision or order Exemptions from notice requirements	13 14
Part 4 Access to Information	
Disclosure of information Provision of information Extension of time	15 16 17
Part 5 Land Compensation Board Procedures	
Appeals Notice of appeal Pre-hearing matters Conduct of a hearing and decision Combining hearings Costs Fees Extension of time	18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

1

