

NC Private Well Owner Compliance Checklist

2026 Edition · Septic & Well Pro · Based on 15A NCAC 02C and county health-department rules

This checklist covers the regulatory requirements that apply to private drinking-water wells in North Carolina. Use it before a well-drilling project, at property purchase, or as an annual self-audit. Items are grouped by life-cycle stage. The state baseline applies in every county unless your county health department has published a more stringent local rule — verify locally before relying on this document.

1. Permit & Site Evaluation (Before Drilling)

- Application submitted to county environmental health department
- Proposed well location flagged on the property
- Site evaluation completed by county environmental health specialist
- All setback distances verified on site map (see table below)
- Permit fee paid (typically \$100–\$250 depending on county)
- Permit issued and within validity window (usually 12 months from issue)
- Certified well contractor selected (Type A certification verified with NC DEQ)

2. Setback Distances Required (15A NCAC 02C)

Contamination Source	Minimum Distance
Septic tank	50 ft
Septic drain field (nitrification field)	100 ft
Property line	25 ft
Surface water (stream, pond, lake)	50 ft
Sewer line	50 ft
Animal or poultry building	100 ft
Chemical or petroleum storage	100 ft
Cemetery / burial site	100 ft
Waste disposal site / landfill	500 ft

Some counties (e.g. Mecklenburg, Wake) require additional setback distances beyond the state minimums. Confirm with your county environmental health office before finalizing the well location.

3. Construction Standards (15A NCAC 02C .0107)

- Casing material: new steel, PVC, or stainless steel meeting ASTM/NSF standards

- Casing depth: minimum 20 ft from land surface (43 ft in Rule .0117 areas)
- Bedrock seat: at least 5 ft into competent rock (consolidated rock wells)
- Unconsolidated formation: casing extends at least 1 ft into water-bearing formation
- Casing diameter: typically 6 in for residential drinking water
- Casing height: at least 12 in above land surface
- Annular space grouted from bottom of casing to ground surface (no partial grouting)
- Grout placed via tremie pipe or pump from bottom upward (no surface pouring)
- Vermin-proof, watertight sanitary well cap installed
- Vented caps have screened vents (24-mesh or finer)
- All openings (piping, wiring, vents) terminate at least 12 in above grade

4. Initial Water Quality Test (Required at Construction)

- Total coliform bacteria — must be absent (negative)
- E. coli — must be absent (negative)
- Nitrate-nitrogen — below EPA MCL of 10 mg/L
- pH recorded for baseline
- If coliform positive: shock chlorinate, retest, do not use until negative
- If nitrate above MCL: consult county health department on treatment
- Approval letter received from county before well placed in service

5. Annual Maintenance & Testing (Recommended)

- Total coliform & E. coli — annually (\$15–\$25 via NC State Lab)
- Nitrate — annually if near agriculture/septic/infants in household
- pH, iron, manganese, hardness — every 3–5 years
- Lead and copper — at least once (older plumbing)
- Arsenic — at least once (Piedmont and Blue Ridge wells)
- VOCs — if near commercial/industrial sites, gas stations, dry cleaners
- Visual inspection of well cap and casing for damage
- Records retained: test results, pump service, repairs

6. Selling Property with a Well

- NC Residential Property Disclosure Statement completed truthfully (water supply section)
- Well water test results obtained within 6 months of closing
- Lender requirements verified (FHA/VA require well water test)
- Optional well inspection by certified contractor (\$100–\$300)

- County-specific transfer requirements verified (some counties require inspection)
- Setback compliance verified (existing wells grandfathered if pre-rule)

7. Decommissioning an Unused Well

- Type D certified well contractor hired (well owner cannot self-abandon)
- Pump and equipment removed
- Casing filled bottom-to-top with neat cement grout or concrete
- No voids or bridges in the grout column
- Casing cut or removed below grade
- Hole capped at grade
- GW-30 abandonment record submitted to county and NC DEQ within 30 days
- Cost: typically \$500–\$2,000

8. Contractor Verification

- Type A certification confirmed for new well construction
- Type B certification for repairs / Type C for pump install / Type D for abandonment
- Certification verified directly with NC DEQ Division of Water Resources
- Liability insurance proof obtained
- Written estimate / contract retained

Owner Self-Audit Sign-Off

Reviewed by _____

Date _____

Next review due _____

Sources: 15A NCAC 02C .0100–.0125 · NC DEQ Division of Water Resources · NC DHHS State Laboratory of Public Health · county-level environmental health departments. This checklist summarizes the rules in force as of 2026 and is for general homeowner guidance. Always confirm current local requirements with your county environmental health office before relying on it for permitting, sale, or compliance decisions. Prepared by Septic & Well Pro · septicandwell.com.