



Heartland Health Region

Building a region of healthy people and healthy communities and service excellence in an enduring health system

HealthLine
1-877-800-0002

Rural Water Pipeline Questions and Answers

Q. Do I need a permit from the Heartland Health Region in order to connect to a Rural Water Pipeline?

A. YES. A permit and an application, to connect to the water utility are required prior to water being provided to your residence. The application must be signed by a Journeyman plumber and submitted to the Heartland Health Region office, prior to scheduling an inspection.

Permit applications can be obtained by your contractor.

Q. Is there a cost for the permit?

A. YES. There is a \$20.00 fee for the permit. This fee covers the inspection and approval process for the connection to the Rural Water Utility.

Q. Who do I call to get an inspection on my home when connecting to the Sask Landing Rural Water Pipeline?

A. Your certified plumber or qualified person must call your local Public Health Inspector, and book an appointment for a final inspection before the water is turned on by the water utility.

Q. What does a Health Inspector do during their inspection?

A. A Public Health Inspector will inspect your home's cistern and any portion of the water distribution system, to ensure there are no possible cross connections or other issues that may be a hazard to you or the rural water system. After the final inspection, the Public Health Inspector will provide the water utility with approval to turn on the water once all issues have been resolved.

Q. Can I use an existing cistern?

A. YES. An existing cistern can be used. However, an existing cistern may have to be altered for it to meet current regulations. The bottom of the inlet pipe must be at least 50mm from the top of the cistern overflow for all new or existing cisterns. The use of a cistern that lacks a top or is located beneath a basement is not recommended.

Visit the Heartland website at www.hrha.sk.ca/phinspection.htm

Q. Can I alter my existing cistern myself?

A. YES. You can alter your existing cistern. However, it is recommended to hire or consult a certified plumber to ensure it meets current regulations and standards.

Q. How large should my cistern be?

A. The cistern should be able to hold enough water to supply the house for two days (about 700 to 1500 liters/150 to 300 gallons). Larger cisterns are not recommended because the water quality deteriorates in the cistern when it is stored for longer than 2 days.

Q. Do I need an overflow device on my cistern?

A. YES. An overflow, which eliminates backflow, is required to be installed on any existing cistern or new cistern connected to your home. The top of the overflow must be at least 50mm (approx. 2 inches) from the bottom of the inlet pipe and must be at least 2 times the diameter of the inlet pipe (eg. ½ inch inlet line = 1 inch overflow outlet line.). The use of a cistern within a home without an overflow is also not recommend, due to the risk of flooding the home should a problem develop with the float shutoff in the tank.

Q. Where can I connect my overflow line from my cistern?

A. An overflow line from a cistern can be plumbed to an existing floor drain in a home. An air gap of at least 50mm (2 inches) is required at the floor drain.

Q. Is my existing buried cistern safe to use?

A. A concrete cistern that is buried may not prevent ground water or soil from leaking into the manhole, thereby contaminating the water. Older cisterns may also have cracked and heaved, if it is buried in heavy clay soil. This will make the water from the pipeline unsafe to drink. We strongly recommend you install a water tank that is NSF Standard 61 (potable water). The new tank should be installed in the basement rather than in the ground. If you wish to use your existing buried cistern, a careful inspection by your contractor is recommended. This will ensure that ground water is not contaminating the water.

Q. What else do I need to know when I am using an existing buried cistern?

Should a buried cistern be utilized, the installation of an overflow line will not be possible. For buried cisterns, an air gap will be required between the incoming water line and operational water level into tank. As well, in order to provide a location for the water meter check valve assembly a manhole that is at least 2.8M/9feet in depth (for frost protection) will be required to be installed adjacent to the cistern. The manhole installation will be at the homeowners cost. **Our office generally recommends that the water meter /backflow devices be installed in the basement of the home when utilizing existing buried cisterns. This will provide flexibility for future replacement should the buried tank fail in the future. However, the installation of the line from the home to the buried tank would involve extra cost for the home owners.**

Q. Can I connect the water system myself?

A. NO. A certified plumber or qualified person is required to plumb the final connection from the Sask Landing Rural Water Pipeline to your home. A security wire and seal may also be installed on the supply line valve, keeping the valve in the closed position. This wire is NOT to be removed until an approval inspection is conducted by your local Health Inspector.

Q. I currently have an existing well. Can I still use my well to also supply water to my cistern connected to my home and the rural water system?

A. NO. An existing well cannot be connected to the same cistern or any water line supplied by the Sask Landing Rural Water Pipeline. If a well is still to be used, the water line(s) and connections(s) must be completely separate from the communal waterworks system, and must only supply water for irrigation or outside purposes.

Q. Do I need to do anything to my existing well if I am not going to use it anymore?

A. Yes. An existing well, that will be abandoned and no longer used, must be properly decommissioned. Information on decommissioning wells can be found online at:

<https://www.wsask.ca/en/Water-Info/Ground-Water/Abandonment-Test-Holes-and-Wells--/>

It is recommended to hire a professional, capable of decommissioning, to help reclaim any water well that will be abandoned.

It is recommended that if you intend to keep your well in service that is only used for irrigation or outside purposes only. The well cannot be connected to the water pipeline or any cistern used for pipeline water storage.

Q. Do I need to do anything once I am connected to the rural water system?

A. It is recommended to that all existing water lines are flushed, once connected to the system, in order to ensure fresh, potable water is being supplied to all fixtures in the home.

When leaving the home for extended periods of time, it is recommended to have someone inspect the cistern and system at least every 48 hours to ensure it is functioning properly. Alternatively the system could be shut down and upon return, flushed out your water lines. If you are flushing your cistern, it is recommended to flush the majority through an outside faucet so as not to overwhelm your septic tank and onsite sewage disposal system.

Regular cleaning and sanitizing of the cistern is recommend – For recommendations and procedures for cistern maintenance refer to **Maintaining Safe Domestic Water Quality with On-Farm Cisterns and Water Tank** available online at:

http://www4.agr.gc.ca/resources/prod/doc/terr/pdf/OnfarmCisterns_e.pdf

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your local
Public Health Inspector for more information.

Visit the Heartland website at www.hrha.sk.ca/phinspection.htm