

**Ordinance Change Relating to Monitoring  
Well and Soil Boring Program;  
and approval of the initial schedule of fees.**

**Public Works and Engineering**

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# Monitoring Well and Soil Boring Program

- The Monitoring Well and Soil Boring Program is administered by Public Works and Engineering Department.

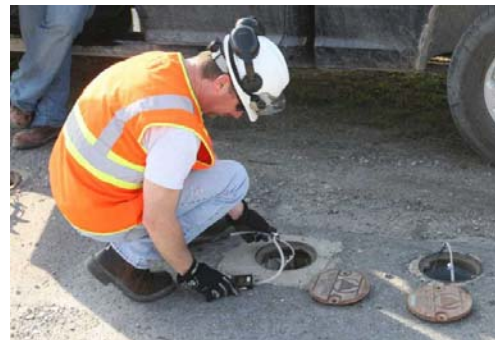
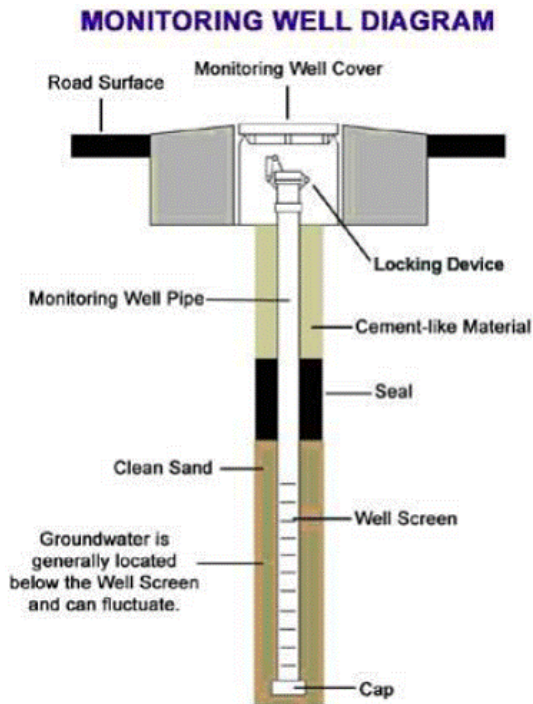
The goals of the Program are:

- To permit the drilling, installation, and closure of borings and wells within the city right of way.
- To educate the public regarding potential monitoring well hazards within the city right of way.
- To minimize any risks to public health with compliance in bringing deficient monitoring wells within the city right of way to proper standards.

These are accomplished by compliance with City of Houston CODE OF ORDINANCES, Chapter 40, Article XII, Sections 40-281 through 40-310

# What is a Monitoring Well?

- Any well and its associated apparatus, designed to measure or monitor the quality or movement of foreign substances, or pollutants below the surface of the ground



# What is a Soil Boring?

- Soil core boring from a depth of greater than one foot below the surface of the ground, for the purpose of removing soil for testing.



# **Why are wells place in the City right-of-way?**

Wells are constructed to observe conditions at defined or required locations.

Locations are usually selected on the basis of known or expected conditions and the location of pollutant or contaminant sources.

They are located close to or within areas of pollution or contamination.

Proper design is essential for reliable samples.

# Current Ordinance issues

A comparative study has been completed to evaluate the City of Houston's Monitoring Well (MW) and Soil Boring Permit program and other U.S. cities of a similar size and evaluate cost of services.

During this study, the following revisions to the current ordinance became apparent:

- 1.The current fee structure has not been updated since 1991 and is not consistent with cities of comparable size.
2. There are no penalties or remedies for violators.
- 3.No requirements for any notification prior to drilling.
- 4.No notification required for plugging a well.
- 5.No requirement for drillers to be currently licensed under state law.
6. No provision for applicants to submit a colored Geographic Information for mapping locations.

# Effect of Proposed Changes

1. Add an enforcement clause to the ordinance that defines penalties and/or remedies for violators.
2. Require permit applicant to provide 48 hour notice before a well is drilled.
3. Require permit applicant to provide a 48 hour notice before a well is plugged and abandoned.
4. Add an enforcement clause to the ordinance that defines penalties or remedies for drilling without a license.
5. Include provision to submit a Geographic Information System (GIS) database layer or map with including the geographical coordinates of the well.
6. Increase the original Application Fee defined in the current ordinance from \$200.00 to \$350.00, the processing fee for multiple facilities from \$25.00 per facility to \$75.00, and renewals from \$25.00 to \$75.00.

# CONCLUSION

Only through updating the ordinance can the necessary revisions be made to strengthen the Monitoring Well and Soil Boring Permitting Process.

Revisions will allow for:

- Offsetting the actual expenses of program.
- Insuring wells are not poorly installed, abandoned, and/or left open (uncapped) within the City's Right-of-Ways.
- Controlling the risk of open wells, which could provide direct access to groundwater.