



# From Septic Systems to Stormwater Drainage Wells and Beyond:

Protecting Groundwater by Managing Class V  
Underground Injection Control Wells on Tribal Lands

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • Pacific Southwest • July 2025

## What is a Class V well

Class V wells put nonhazardous fluids underground. The most common type of injection wells on

Tribal land, Class V wells include large-capacity septic systems, stormwater dry wells, and agricultural drainage wells. **If not properly managed, Class V wells can harm groundwater quality.**

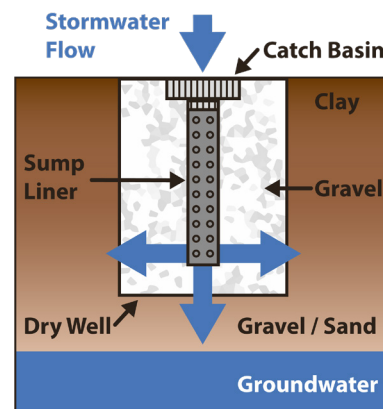
Requirements for injection well owners / operations:



[epa.gov/uic/forms/r9-uic-well-registration#form](https://epa.gov/uic/forms/r9-uic-well-registration#form)

1. Register the injection well(s) with EPA's Underground Injection Control (UIC) program.
2. Don't use injection wells in ways that risk polluting underground sources of drinking water.

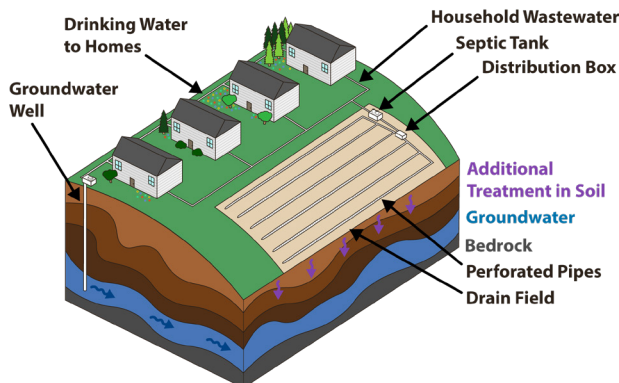
Most Class V wells are "authorized by rule" by EPA, so you don't need a special permit if you follow the above requirements. However, local, state, or Tribal rules might be stricter than federal ones, and it's up to the owner or operator to make sure they follow all the regulations.



**Illustration of a stormwater dry well**

## What is a Large-Capacity Septic System?

A wastewater system is classified as a large-capacity system if it receives solely sanitary waste either from multiple dwellings or from a non-residential establishment, and the system has the capacity to serve 20 or more persons per day. Injection wells serving single family homes do not need to register their septic system unless they are used by a home-based business.



**Illustration of a large-capacity septic system**

## My runoff discharges to a swale, pond or ditch. Is this injection?

No. If there is no subsurface (buried) discharge component to the system, then it is not subject to UIC requirements, though it may be subject to Clean Water Act requirements or other water protection regulations.

## Are there types of Class V injection wells that are especially dangerous to groundwater?

Yes, motor vehicle waste disposal wells and large-capacity cesspools are banned by the EPA. Motor vehicle waste disposal wells collect fluids like engine oil, solvents, and degreasers from vehicle repair or maintenance and usually connect to a septic system or dry well through floor drains. Large-capacity cesspools, also known as pit toilets or privies, capture sanitary waste but do not treat it.

For more information about well safety, reach out to [R9iWells@epa.gov](mailto:R9iWells@epa.gov)