



## Competency Testing and Continuing Education for Private Water Systems Contractors

Ohio is one of the few remaining states that do not require competency testing and continuing education for private water systems contractors. Therefore, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is proposing to amend Ohio Revised Code to add competency testing and continuing education requirements for the roughly 875 registered private water systems contractors throughout the state.

The addition of competency testing requirements will help ensure that contractors have the training and technical knowledge to provide safe drinking water supplies for Ohio citizens in rural and suburban areas. The language also provides alternative financial assurance options for some contractors who, due to economic or religious reasons, may not be able to obtain conventional surety bonds. These provisions will permit small business owners to demonstrate alternative documentation that will help assure consumers that they are financially solvent. These changes are supported by the Ohio Water Well Association representing the water well drilling industry.

ODH will prepare and administer the competency exams. The department will work with the local health districts to arrange for the exams to be taken at the local health district. ODH will pay for the education and testing through the current contractor annual registration fees.

Competency testing will be implemented with existing funds, thus providing more service to the contractors for the same registration fee amount. These changes to the ORC will help ensure that contractors have the training and technical knowledge to provide safe drinking water supplies for Ohio citizens.

### *Why Start Competency Testing Now?*

*Lack of contractor training increases state program costs due to increased enforcement and investigations*

*Without this law change, some small businesses will not be able to register and work because they can't qualify for conventional surety bonds*

