

NOTICE

To BCCA Members About Groundwater Licensing

September 23, 2016

Tips for Applying	Enclosed is a Helpful Hints handout to assist any member with answering the minimum mandatory questions on the groundwater licence application for existing wells. Telephone assistance is available from FrontCounterBC toll free 1-877-855-3222.
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Q & A	Enclosed are some commonly asked questions about water licensing.
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Fees & Payments	<p>There are two types of fees to pay with a licence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <u>Application fee</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This fee is currently waived until March 1, 2017.○ BCCA has requested that government extend the “no application fee” period until 2018 and is waiting for a decision.2) <u>Water Rental fee</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This is the fee you pay for volume that you have licensed for.○ Regardless of when you apply, this fee is retroactive to March 1, 2016.○ Applying for your licence prior to December 31st will help avoid having to pay for multiple years at one time. <p>Application payments can be made by mail (cheque/money order to Minister of Finance), online by Credit Card, or in person (debit/cash) at a FrontCounter BC office.</p>
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Getting Help	<p>Applying on your own... Telephone assistance is available to any applicant, from FrontCounter BC toll free 1-877-855-3222.</p> <p>Slow internet connection... Your application can be done from any computer terminal. You can visit a FrontCounter BC office to access a computer or many local libraries also offer free computer access.</p> <p>Not comfortable using with computers... BCCA understands that many members are not familiar with computers. We are working to organize regional workshops or have people available to assist members with completing their applications.</p> <p>Sign up for BCCA E-news... To stay current with all the industry issues and Association activities sign up for BCCA’s free electronic newsletter. www.cattlemen.bc.ca</p>
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Q&A: Commonly Asked Questions about Water Licensing

Is water licensing mandatory? As of February 29, 2016, all non-domestic groundwater users - including existing users - are required to apply for a water licence.

What is the difference between well registration and groundwater licensing? *Registering* your well creates a record of your water use and helps to ensure that your use is considered by the decision makers dealing with other licence applications. *Licensing* clarifies how much water you can legally use and increases the security of your access to that water. Licensing establishes rights to groundwater based on the same priority scheme that currently exists for surface water, and will help to reduce conflicts between water users in times of scarcity.

Do I need to register my well if I have applied for a groundwater licence? No, if you are applying for a groundwater licence you do not need to register your well. Your well will automatically be registered during the licensing process.

How is this different from my current water licence? Many ranchers have existing **surface water licences** (for streams, lakes, rivers, etc.). However, it is a new requirement that people must also licence their use of water from groundwater sources (drilled wells, aquifers, artesian flow, etc.). Anyone using a groundwater source for anything other than domestic use must apply for a licence.

What is the process for applying for a groundwater licence? Applications are made online and assistance is available over the phone or in-person at your local FrontCounter BC office.

- For online applications, visit <http://www.frontcounterbc.ca/browse.html>
- For telephone assistance, call toll free at: **1-877-855-3222**
- For in-person assistance, contact your local FrontCounter BC office to make an appointment for one-on-one help completing your application.

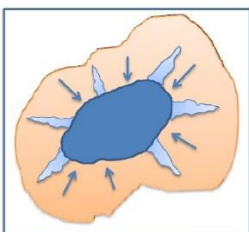
Is there a deadline for applying for a licence? For existing groundwater users, there is a three-year transition period (ending on March 1, 2019) to submit this application. If you are an existing non-domestic groundwater user, you are encouraged to apply within the three-year transition period to maintain your date of precedence. Note: If you submit your application on or before March 1, 2017, your application fees will be waived.

How do I prove the date of first use? You will be asked to provide evidence of the date of first use in order to set the date of precedence. Evidence can include: records and invoices related to the construction of wells and other works; Environmental Assessment Certificates; well maintenance records; photographs; signed statements from persons having information or knowledge of your use of water; or other corroborating information that would be recognized as evidence of historic use.

Do I need a water licence if I use a dugout? Depending upon the type of water source used for your dugout, a *surface water licence* may be required. See the examples below. Surface water licences are applied for online (visit <http://www.frontcounterbc.ca/browse.html>) or through FrontCounter BC offices.

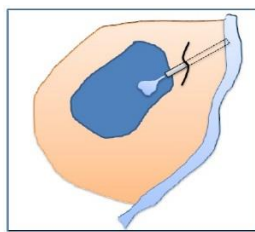
Dugout #1 Surface Runoff*

Is filled completely by surface runoff and snow melt from surrounding topography. In the Province of British Columbia a water licence is not required for this type of dugout.



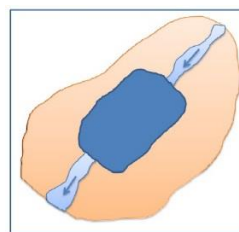
Dugout #2 – Filled by a Diversion

Is located adjacent to a flowing watercourse or stream and is filled by either pumping or diverting water from that source. To divert water from a stream in the Province of British Columbia a water licence is required.



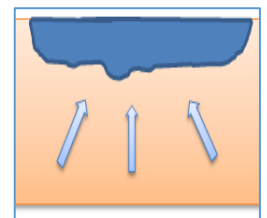
Dugout #3 -- Dam

Is constructed in a stream. This type is not recommended and would likely constitute a Dam which requires a storage licence and an engineered design. A water licence would also be required as well as authorization to work in and about a stream.



Dugout # 4 – Groundwater Fed

Is filled from groundwater seeping into the dugout. A water licence is required for this type of dugout.



HELPFUL HINTS

When Applying for an Existing Groundwater (well) Licence

BEFORE YOU START

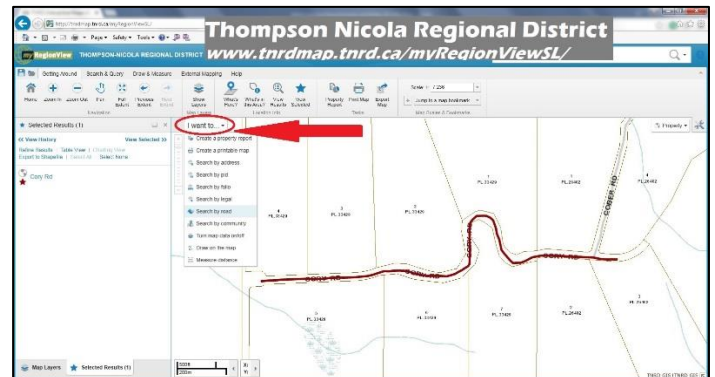
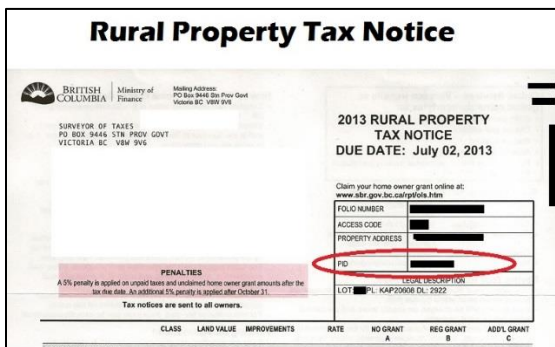
Here are the documents/information you will need to complete your application:

- **Proof of date of first use**

This could be a well log or a signed statement that validates your date of first use.

- **PID of your property**

A Parcel Identifier, or PID, is a nine-digit number that uniquely identifies a parcel in the land title registry in BC. It can be found on your Rural Property Tax Notice or using your regional district mapping website.



- **Legal description of your property**

This can also be located on your Property Tax Assessment Notice (or via regional district mapping website). This is often written as a Lot#, Plan# (PL), and District Lot # (DL).

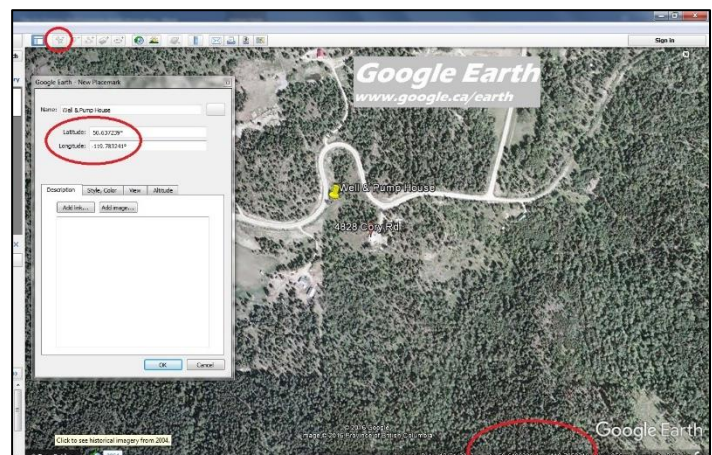
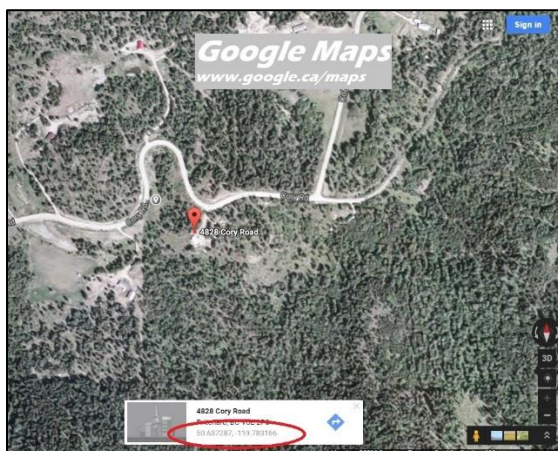
- **Map/drawing**

You will need a map or drawing showing the location of your well head, mainline or water trough. This can be a simple map.

- **Geographic coordinates of your well**

You will be required to enter the geographic coordinates in "Decimal Degree" format.

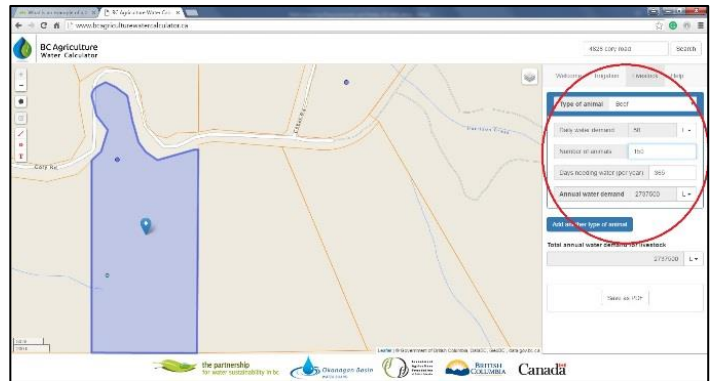
This can be found in a variety of ways. Using Google Earth or Google Maps may be the simplest. Search your address and using your mouse, click on the spot where your well is located. The coordinates are listed in the box.



- **Volume of water you are applying for**
You will need to calculate the volume of water that you are applying for. This needs to be done for each purpose that you are licensing (irrigation and/or stock watering).

A water calculator tool has been developed for BC agriculture that is easy to use.

<http://www.bcagriculturewatercalculator.ca/>

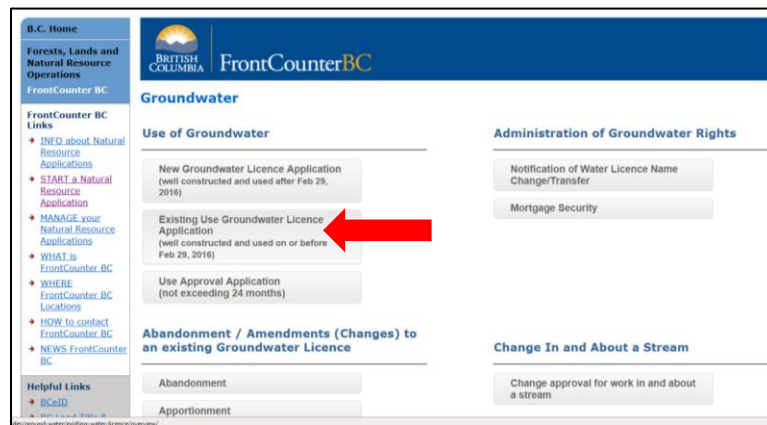


- **Determine if you have a BCeID**
You may already have a BCeID for things such as a hunting licence or medical services plan. If you already have a BCeID, you don't need a new one to apply for a groundwater licence.

If you do not already have a BCeID, we recommend that you apply for a Basic BCeID. To apply for a Basic BCeID visit the BCeID website: www.bceid.ca and click "Register" at the bottom of the page. You can start an application without a BCeID **but you will not have the ability to come back** to the application or make any changes.

STEP # 1 – Starting Your Application

- **Access the water licensing website**
 - Start your application at: <http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/Start/ground-water/>
 - Be sure to choose **Existing Use Groundwater Licence Application**.



IMPORTANT

- Once you begin the application **keep saving it**.
- Not all questions in the application must be answered. Applications can be submitted once all the mandatory questions have been completed. These are the **questions that have a red asterisk * beside them**.
- Depending on how you answer the "Yes" or "No" questions you may have to upload a document or provide more information.

STEP #2 -- Eligibility

Question	Response
Are you the owner of land or a mine in British Columbia where the water will be used?	"Yes"

STEP #3 -- Technical Information

Question - Proof of Use	Response
Have you been using groundwater for purposes other than domestic use prior to February 29, 2016?	"Yes"

- At this point you will be asked to **upload a "Proof of Use" document** to establish the priority date.
- A proof of use document could be a well log or a statement outlining some history of your well such as when it was drilled and first used.
- This statement could come from your neighbor, a family member or someone who knows the history of your well. A personal statement may also be acceptable.

Question - Environmental Assessment	Response
Does your application require an Environmental Assessment?	Will likely be "No" since the well is already drilled

Enter Your Well Purposes

Here you will need to identify all the purposes that you use your well for (irrigation, stockwatering, etc.). If you have more than one purpose, you will need to complete this step for each purpose. Begin by clicking the "add purpose" button.

To enter an IRRIGATION purpose:

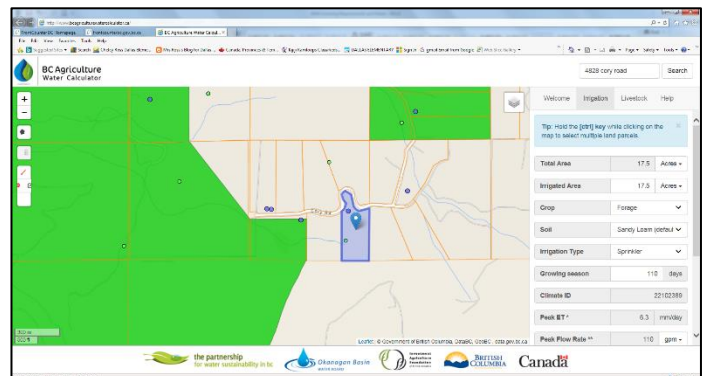
- Choose irrigation in Step 1
- Choose irrigation again in Step 2

Question – Seasonal Use	Response
Do you want to use the water only seasonally?	Yes or No -- <i>Probably Yes</i>

- Now asks for **quantity in m³/yr** as well as area to be irrigated in hectares (there is a conversion button that takes you to an online conversion site **BUT** it is best to use the water calculator tool developed specifically for BC agriculture that is available at <http://www.bcagriculturewatercalculator.ca/>)

USING THE BC AG WATER CALCULATOR

- Start by entering the street address of the property where the well is located.
- A map of your lot comes up. Click on the property location.
- From there you can choose your purpose "irrigation" or "livestock".
- For irrigation you click on the lot that you will be irrigating with the well you are licensing and select your attributes.
- This tool shows the total area of the property. You can then enter the amount of irrigated acres.
- Choose the crop
- Choose the soil type
- Choose irrigation type
- Choose growing season
- Climate, Peak ET and Peak Flow rate is already set up resulting in a m³/yr of water usage.



GO BACK TO YOUR APPLICATION

- You need to submit the information in hectares.
Convert acres to hectares: # hectares = # acres X 0.4046856 .
- There is also a comment box on the application. If you were applying for more volume than you are currently watering you could enter that information in this comment box.

***Remember* you have 3 years to make beneficial use of the water requested.** If you “think” you will be irrigating an extra 20, 50, 100 acres with your existing well (if you have the volume in your well), then apply for that additional volume. That is a decision each applicant must make as you will be paying for the volume that you license for.

- Once you save your “irrigation” entry, it will show up as a purpose on your application.
- If you also use the well for stock watering, you need to add another “Livestock Water” purpose.

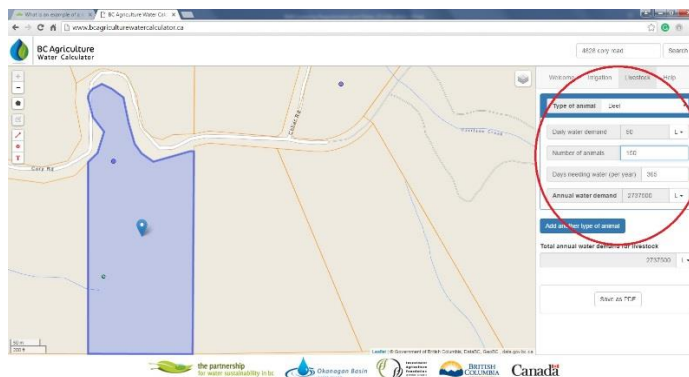
***REMINDER: Save your application. ***

To enter the LIVESTOCK WATER purpose:

- Choose “Industrial” in Step 1.
- In Step 2, select “Livestock and Animal”

Question – Seasonal Use	Response
Do you want to use the water only seasonally?	Yes or No

- Now asks for **m³/year** (which you can get from the Ag Water Calculator <http://www.bcagriculturewatercalculator.ca/>)



GO BACK TO YOUR APPLICATION

- Enter the type of livestock
- Enter the number of livestock
- Add any additional comments (if any)
- You now have two purposes and can edit both of those.

REMINDER: Save your application.

To enter the Works information:

Question	Response
Will water be diverted using a well?	“Yes”. Add Well button appears.

To Add A Well:

Click on the add well button and questions relating to your well come up. **You only have to answer the mandatory questions (shown with a red asterisk*)**

- **Status:** you will likely choose fully constructed. A popup window with more questions will appear.
- **Well information:** You do not have to enter information on volume of well, casing size, well tag number, aquifer name, etc.

Questions -- Well Information Question Summary	Responses
Status of the well	Fully Constructed. <i>Additional questions appear.</i>
Date of construction	Enter this if you know it.
*Geographic coordinates	Enter in "decimal degrees" format. <i>Use Google Earth or Google Maps to obtain this information. See beginning.</i>
*Select how you got the geographic coordinated	Enter the method you used.
Well is on Crown/private land	Choose either "Crown" or "Private"
*Is the well a flowing artesian well at any time of the year?	Enter Yes/No/Unknown
*Is the well head in a pit or sump?	Enter Yes/No
*Are there other wells on the property that are not in use?	Enter Yes/No/Unknown

Note: Many wells that were drilled in the 1970's and early 1980's are in a well pit (meaning the casing may be below ground level). We have gained an exemption from having to upgrade wells located in a pit or sump for existing wells.

REMINDER: Save your application.

Well Documents to Attach:

You have the option to upload any documents you feel are relevant or provide more information on your well.

This is not where you attach a drawing of your works. That drawing is uploaded at the end of the application.

Question -- Proximity to surface water	Response
Does any documentation indicate there is a hydraulic connection between the well and surface water?	Yes / No
Question -- Other lands physically affected	Response
Are there any other lands physically affected by your works?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>
Question -- Joint Works	Response
Are any of your works joint with another person's or group's works?	Yes / No
Question -- Water Users Community	Response
Will the water be supplied by a Water Users Community?	Yes / No
Do any of your works require permission to occupy Crown land?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>
Question -- Other Authorization	Response
These questions do not appear to be relevant to existing wells that are already constructed. Your responses are most likely all "No".	
Does any work occur within the public road allowance or has to cross a public road?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>
Are you planning to cut timber on Crown Land?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>
Are you planning to use an open fire to burn timber or other materials?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>
Are you supplying potable water to consumers?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>
Will fish or wildlife habitat be affected?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No (since the well is already in place).</i>
Are you planning to undertake mineral exploration?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>
Do you need to construct a road to a dam?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>

Do you want to construct works within an existing forest road right-of-way on Crown land?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No (since the well is already in place).</i>
Do you want to transport heavy equipment or materials on an existing forest road?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No (since the well is already in place).</i>
Do you want to use the water for livestock watering on Crown land?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No (See note below)</i>
Are you eligible for a fee exemption?	Yes / No -- <i>Probably No</i>

Note: The Livestock watering regulations are being developed now and it is our understanding that a licence for stock watering on Crown land will likely be covered by the Ministry issued authorizations (tenures).

REMINDER: Save your application.

STEP #4 - Location

- **Add Land Info**

Click the add land information button and more questions

- ***What is the category of land ownership?** "Private" or "Crown land" or "Other"
- Once you chose "Private" more questions appear.
- ***Enter the Parcel Identifier (PID)** -- *this can be found on your Property Tax Notice.*
- ***Enter the Legal Description** -- *this can be found on your Property Tax Notice.*
- You do NOT have to upload your Certificate of Title or provide the Certificate #.

- **Mapping Options**

This question refers to the map that you need to provide showing the well and your works. It asks you to choose one of the mapping options.

- **There are many options for providing the map:**

- If you have an existing paper plan of your lot, you can draw in the well location, the mainline and outline the area to be irrigated. There is no area to be outlined if you are licensing for stock watering.
 - You can use [Google Earth](#)
 - You can use the mapping tool on your Regional District website
 - You can use the mapping tool from the [BC Agriculture Water Calculator](#) website
 - If you choose "I need a tool to help me" then a map tool will pop-up
- Each of the options allows you to upload your map.
 - ***IMPORTANT* All maps need to identify your well location, the location of your mainline and any diversions/troughs.**
 - If you are using a paper map, you need to mark your works on the map. Then you will need to scan it into your computer so that it can be uploaded with your application.

REMINDER: Save your application.

Step #5 -- Document Upload

- Attach your drawing / map
- Attach the Proof / declaration of date of first use of well

Step #6 -- Privacy Declaration

- ***Check the box at "Check Here"** to indicate that you have read and agree to the privacy declaration stated above. (Note: you cannot proceed without checking this box).

Step #7 -- Contact Information

Question	Response
If approved, will the authorization be issued to an individual or a company/organization?	Individual or Company/Organization
Are you the individual this authorization will be issued to?	Yes / No If yes, confirm your contact information previously provided.

Are there co-applicants for this application?	Yes or No If "Yes," additional info is needed.
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Referral Information

- *Enter your contact name, address, (phone and email are optional)
- *Check the box stating “I hereby grant permission for the public release of the information provided above. This information will be used to fulfill, if required, the referral and advertising requirements of my application.”

REMINDER -- Keep saving your application. You can review the application before submitting. You can print each page as you go along. Once you have finished Step 7, click next.

Step #8 -- Review

- *If there are any outstanding issues with the application, they will be listed on the screen in red. They will need to be fixed before continuing.
- At this point you can print out your application in PDF format.
- This screen shows any errors and allows you to fix them at this time. You will not be able to submit until you correct the errors.
- You can print off and review the application to ensure you have entered the correct information.

Step #9 -- Declarations

- *Check the box at “By submitting this application form, I declare that the information contained on this form is complete and accurate.”
- At this point you cannot edit your application any further.

Step #10 – Payment & Submission

- There is a box to provide further information.
- Select the payment method. Application payments can be made by mail (cheque/money order to Minister of Finance), online by Credit Card, or in person (debit/cash) at a FrontCounter BC office.
- Question: Is this application for an activity or project that requires more than one natural resource authorization? Yes or No – should be No as it is for an existing well.
- Select which office you wish to submit your application to.
- Print the page.
- Submit your application.

*****IMPORTANT*****

- An application fee amount keeps showing up as you proceed with your application however there is **no application fee if you apply before March 1st, 2017.**
- Payment is required for the fees for the volume of water you are applying for.
NOTE: this fee is retroactive to March 1st, 2016.
- Regardless of when you apply, all wells in existence before this regulation came into effect (Feb 29, 2016) will still have to pay retroactively for water rental fees since March 1st, 2016.
- Applications received within the first 3 years (on or before March 1, 2019) are eligible to maintain their date of precedence (FITFIR date).

FOR ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR APPLICATION:

- For telephone assistance, call FrontCounter BC toll free **1-877-855-3222**
- For in person assistance, contact your local FrontCounter BC office
<http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/locations/>