

Groundwater Exempt Uses

Groundwater uses exempt from the permitting process include (ORS 537.545):

Each exemption is separate, and one well may serve multiple exempt uses. OWRD recommends contacting your local watermaster for specific questions.

- **Group or single domestic use (household):** Not exceeding 15,000 gallons per day.
- **Stock watering:** Drinking water for livestock animals. Water use limitations may apply for some permitted confined animal feeding operations.
- **Irrigation of lawn and/or garden of a half-acre or less:** No more than a half-acre in area. Irrigation of larger areas requires a water use authorization and is not exempt.
- Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, commercial gardens not exceeding a half-acre and using no more than 3,000 gallons per day will qualify as exempt.
- **Industrial or commercial purposes:** Not exceeding 5,000 gallons per day, including the 3,000 gallon per-day cap on commercial gardens of one half-acre or less. Does not allow irrigation or watering to grow marijuana or unregistered hemp plants for commercial purposes.
- **Watering school grounds:** Less than ten acres for schools located within a critical groundwater area.
- **Down-hole heat exchange purposes:** An open loop heat exchange hole to provide source heat.
- **Fire control:** Withdrawal of water for emergency firefighting or certain non-emergency firefighting training.
- **Reuse of recycled water or wastewater for land application:** Recycled water or wastewater applied to land for irrigation that has been previously obtained under a permit or certificate and has not been discharged into waters to the state. Relevant permits from DEQ or ODA apply.

