

How I Got My SFTR Water Tap

Purpose:

Since the availability of SFTR water taps is not currently guaranteed after September 2008, I wanted to apply for a tap and have it installed on my unimproved lot before that deadline. After receiving numerous calls from neighbors who had similar goals, I decided to document my efforts for others to see.

I hope this information is useful to you, but this DOES NOT document the only way to get a water tap. The decisions I made were the lowest cost choices that met my needs at the time they were made. Each property owner should make their own decisions concerning their water tap, and will be solely responsible for the outcome. Make your own decisions and take responsibility for them.

My Experience:

First, I went to the SFTR website (www.santafetrailranch.com), clicked on WATER SYSTEM in the left column, then clicked on WATER TAP APPLICATION in the right window. I opened each of the 9 documents on the page and printed each (using the PRINT button in Adobe Acrobat Reader rather than the PRINT button in your browser). I took the time to read and understand all 9 documents. Some of these were forms that I had to fill out and submit as part of the application package. The last document was a checklist of the 11 steps involved in the application process. I'll discuss this checklist in more detail later.

Second, I determined the desired location of my future driveway and called Tony Riley of the SFTR POA Address Committee (719-846-8346). Tony determined what my future address would be based on the location I showed him, and submitted an application for my new address to the County. I needed this street address for some of the permits I'd be applying for.

Third, I determined the location of my current water tap with the help of the Metro District. I contacted Bob Scott (719-845-0007). Look for a PVC pipe and T-post sticking out of the ground, perhaps near your green telephone junction box. I needed to know this, because the Metro District was going to install the new meter pit near the current water tap, unless I specified otherwise and paid for the additional work to relocate it.

Fourth, I determined the desired location of my future cistern. I decided to locate future cistern near the intersection of my driveway and the road to allow me to trench the water line along my future driveway. This eliminates the cost of clearing a second path from the road to the house, which would require removing additional trees and fatally disturbing the roots of others. If the current water tap was a significant distance from the desired cistern location, I'd have to determine if it was cheaper to pay to trench in a long water line from the current tap location to the desired new cistern location, or to pay to have a new water tap installed near the desired cistern location. The cost of a new water tap starts at \$500 and may be significantly more depending on the difficulty encountered (rocky ground, etc.) when installing it.

Now back to the 11 steps of the SFTR Water Tap Application Checklist. Here's what I did for each step.

Step 1 - Deed: I went to the Las Animas County Clerk & Recorder's Office in the County Courthouse (719-846-3314) and requested a copy of my deed. The copy fee was \$1.25 per page. They told me that most deeds are only 1 page.

Step 2 - Septic permit: I went to the Las Animas County Health Department in the building adjacent to Mt. San Rafael Hospital (719-846-2213) and spoke with John Martinez. I applied for a septic permit, which cost \$475 including a percolation test. The percolation test requires a test hole 3' deep and 1' wide at the location of the planned septic system. This test will determine if the ground percolates enough to support a functional system.

I was told that if I plan to build soon, I should keep in mind that the permit is good for one year, but if it expires it can be reactivated when actual construction begins. If I don't plan to build for years, I could let it expire and reactivate it when construction begins, but would NOT have to reactivate it each year in the meantime. The current reactivation fee is \$100, but may change in the future.

John Martinez will provide system requirements and instructions to the contractor when construction begins, and must inspect the system before it is buried. The \$475 permit fee covers all of these activities.

Step 3 - Building Permit: After getting my septic permit, I contacted the Las Animas County Planning Office (in the County Courthouse) at 719-846-4486 spoke to building inspector Kerry Taube. He said to submit a simple drawing of a 200 square foot structure and a diagram of the placement of that structure on my lot with relation to the property lines. The minimum cost for a building permit is \$83.25.

Step 4 – SFTR POA Letter of Release: I was told that Jeanie Blasi would handle this after my application was submitted (step 11).

Step 5 – Signed Water Use Permit and Annexation Agreement: I filled out and signed the “Water Use Permit and Annexation Agreement” form that I’d printed from the website.

Step 6 – Payment of Fees: I wrote a check payable to “SFTR Metro District” in the amount of \$6320.00.

Step 7 – Cistern Information Sheet: I filled out the “Property Owner’s Cistern Information” form that I’d printed from the website. I indicated on the sheet that my cistern would be installed when construction begins.

Step 8 – Chlorine Test Kit: I indicated on the checklist whether I want to purchase a chlorine test kit from the Metro District. I was told that if I wanted one, I would be billed for the current cost of the kit on my first water bill. As of January 3, 2008, the cost of the kit was \$45.29. (I have one of these kits, and use it periodically to test the chlorine levels in my cistern.)

Step 9 – Access Agreement or Waiver: I filled out and signed either the “Residential Access Agreement” or the “Waiver of Residential Access Agreement” that I’d printed from the website. (I signed the Waiver, and plan to test the chlorine levels myself, instead of signing the Access Agreement and having the Metro District test my cistern for me for an additional fee.)

Step 10 – Billing Contact Info: I filled out this info on the checklist. (I included my email address.)

Step 11 – Submit: I submitted the completed checklist along with the 6 required documents and my check to Jeanie Blasi at Century Business Solutions, 109 W. Main St., Trinidad, CO 81082 (719-846-2080). I was told that it typically takes about a week to approve an application and get a water tap issued. Afterward, the Metro District schedules their contractor to install the new meter pit. The installation is typically a one-day job that will be done as soon as the Metro’s contractor is available, sometimes as soon as the week after the tap is issued.

When I begin home construction, I will be required to install a 1500-gallon cistern near the meter pit.

Summary of Costs:

Here’s a look at my budget for the project:

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|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Relocate water tap (if required) | \$500.00 | Metro District |
| Copy of Deed | \$1.25 | County Clerk |
| Septic Permit | \$475.00 | County Health Dept. |
| Building Permit | \$83.25 | County Building Dept. |
| Water Tap Application Fee | <u>\$6,320.00</u> | Metro District |
| Total | \$7,379.50 | |

I hope this document assists others in arriving at the right decision regarding their SFTR water tap. Good luck!

- John Sanders

(This document was last updated 4/13/2008)

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