

25 Red Flags in Online Shopping

Arm yourself with the knowledge to avoid snake-oil, bait-and-switch, Chinese shell companies, warranty-avoidance schemes like "in-person" requirements, and false claims and specifications online.



Product information

Package Dimensions	20.5 x 12 x 5.5 inches
Item Weight	21.7 pounds
Manufacturer	NINGBO CHEERS WATER PUMP CO.,LTD.
ASIN	B07M5Z2NM4
Customer Reviews	★★★★☆ 44 ratings 3.6 out of 5 stars
Best Sellers Rank	#201,197 in Patio, Lawn & Garden (See Top 100 in Patio, Lawn & Garden)

Warranty & Support

Product Warranty: For warranty information about this product, please click here

Feedback

Would you like to tell us about a lower price? >

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1. Trends of Online Marketplace third party 'fulfillment'

Sadly, the last few years have led to a proliferation of Chinese shell companies on US made platforms like Amazon and Ebay, hiding behind made-up, "fly by night" brands that are selling low quality products, claiming warranty and support and then disappearing when reviews get bad or they move on to a next unrelated product. Because it's easier than ever to get online and sell from overseas, many companies pop in and out of Amazon and Ebay every few months - recreating similar listings, changing company names, products, designs - all efforts help bury bad reviews of malfunctioning products, bad support, and avoid needing to support warranties in the future.

2. Reliable Quality vs. Disposable/International and the impact on consumers

As prices increase across the board, many short-term focused companies that are not in it for the long haul are cutting corners. Some companies try to reduce product costs by lowering quality of materials, staff to Quality Control (QC), less R&D and testing, and shorter warranties - or a total lack in intention to honor them; just making false claims like "3 year warranty" when the company is 2 months old and will be out of business in another 2 months! Sustainable business models have to charge more so they can keep great people, honor warranties, support their customers, and keep jobs in the US. Of late, China is the biggest culprit on Amazon. China makes products for the entire world, both the affluent countries and the poor ones, and so they make products of all quality levels. From Apple products known to be fairly well-engineered, to plastic bins that are designed for the poorer countries and will not last. When those cheap products designed for poor countries end up here in the US, we push back. We want higher quality products that last - not disposable ones that are never reliable. Do we have to pay more for those? Yes. But is it better to pass on to the next generation a great product then to toss it in the trash after a few weeks? Of course.

3. Why Amazon/Ebay still win even if the consumer loses after 30 days

Amazon wins on every transaction that gets made on their platform. They would rather we buy everything online vs in a store and would prefer more purchases of lower quality things that are disposable as they win each time. To get people comfortable with the platform they make us feel secure by offering a return policy and what feels a little like an "Amazon warranty" as anything that fails quickly, we are usually able to return it and get our money back. Not always, but the idea is that the platform protects you a little. We've had lots of people have something come up and aren't able to install a product in 30 days (Standard Amazon return window) and so they lose their "Amazon warranty" and that is all you'll get most of the time with products like this - no number to call - just an offshore email address. It's a painful lesson and one that some learn the hard way. We're independently-minded so we support freedom to spend money however you want, but it's hard to hear all these horror stories of late. It's becoming a bigger and bigger issue. More expensive paperweights and irate customers.

4. What is a Marketplace Chinese shell company?

While many of us are used to seeing these now, these Shell Companies are just disposable Amazon BRANDS that can be created and junked quickly. That allows companies to sell low with no intention of a product lasting or supporting a customer. That feels like a modern day snake oil salesman to us. We don't like to see it and we don't want people to fall into those traps. There are a number of ways to protect yourself from this type of thing and many are listed below but you have good intuition already. If it looks too good to be true it probably is. You get what you pay for. Look out for Shell brands that have lots of capital letters (Like ZHKUO and LIANDU-US which are real pump company examples) and when you click on the store owner or manufacturer it is a totally different business name. They will usually have a mailing address in China, no phone number to call and an intentionally broken email address for support. The "Warranty" page doesn't load and they have no website outside of the product listing page on Amazon or Ebay. This is a Shell company just setup to set up shop for a few months and then disappear!

5. How "Warranty Avoidance" Schemes and Scams work

So many companies on Amazon claim impressive warranties. Wow - 5 years from a company that has been around for a month! Impressive. We all know better but it's alluring at least to see long warranties. A Warranty is only as good as the company honoring it - and there has to BE a company honoring it. If you can't find a warranty document, can't translate it, or something seems fishy - it is. Usually a lack of warranty is followed by bad reviews but a lot of companies delete their online profiles before the bad reviews start coming. Like the Snake Oil Salesman leaving town before the sheriff-in-town's wife realized that rash never went away from his "miracle cure". So don't trust a long warranty from a little Amazon company without even a website. It's worth less than their misspelling of it in the listing! Some other scams exist here too. There are some sneaky terms that require customers to bring the product in person to get any support. Interesting. Not a big deal if it's your hardware store down the street but when it's in an industrial park in China, harder to bring it by for support or a replacement. There are companies that just don't respond to emails too and that is another form of a warranty scam. We think unless a company has a REAL phone number AND you have proven they ANSWER the phone in advance in good unbroken English, no one should buy from them.

6. Bait and Switch - False Claims and how the consumer pays the price

This one is pretty self explanatory. It's easy to see a nice graphic of a pump and imagine its size and weight. Photoshopping a product to look bigger than it is unfortunately is pretty common still. Amazon tries to prevent it but they can't stop all the violators. Be sure to report any you see as it helps the next person. The content of the text is also a big one. Lots of listings have copy and pasted specs from real companies and don't know what they are, or if their products have those features. This is ridiculous. The other is extreme exaggeration of performance. Usually these work themselves out with bad reviews, but when companies fold quickly so do their reviews, hiding it from future unsuspecting consumers. Be sure to read over specs and take them all with a grain of salt. Or a few! Watch out especially for materials claimed to be used in manufacturing. Lots of companies claim Stainless Steel for instance and actually use thin coated pot metal that will corrode quickly. Good materials protect your investment. Don't trust everything you read! If your product doesn't look identical to the one you ordered or the photos in the reviews of the product show something that is noticeably different, thinner or lighter-weight, beware!

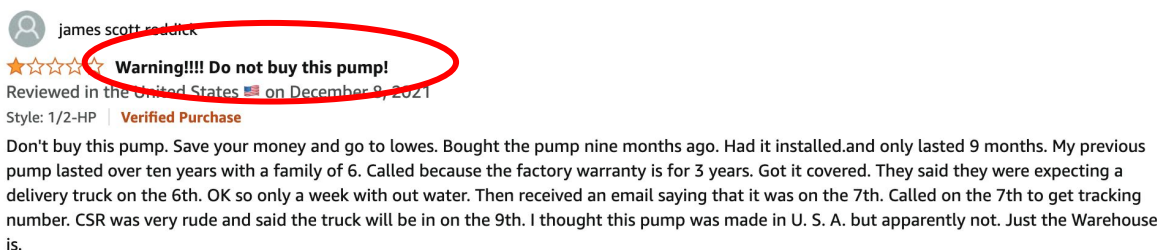
7. Spray and Pray - generalists, lack of specialty or knowledge of actual products means no help when you need it

We've all seen these before. We are looking for a phone charger and we think we find a company that specializes in decent phone chargers - something that will last for at least a few months until we lose it in the truck! So we click into the company selling it and they sell water bottles, soccer balls and Koi fish in Chinese. Huh? There are so many of these now. Generalist shops that sell everything you can imagine in their online 'store' and actually don't know anything about any of it! This is fine for cheaper products and maybe even this phone charger but for anything that we want to last and that we expect to be reliable that we are spending our hard earned money on, we want a company that knows what they are talking about. That means they can support you in choosing the right product, support you if you run into trouble and know that you are getting something a bunch of smart people have thoughtfully designed and carefully packed. We want quality things that are made by experts in their fields. Not generalists that try everything from an overseas industrial park office. In the following section we list all the red flags that we have learned over the years, both from customers and their horror stories, but also with our own knowledge of the industry and how hard it is to build and support great products that last. And deliver exemplary customer support. In practice sometimes you will notice that an Amazon product page has more red flags than not. Great. Move on. It's not that there aren't great products on Amazon we just think its a race to the bottom - it's a race to cheaper and cheaper and it's getting so offensively bad that a document like this needs to exist now.

25 Red flags! Beware!

1. Fake Reviews and review quality

Watch out for new profiles that have 5 or 10 five star reviews and very little written (if anything) for text. If you don't see a mix of reviews written in real english with photos, trust your instincts and beware. These will likely get shut down by Amazon once they figure it out. This company has paid to get reviews. Watch out for reviews close to the same dates all around the same time. And watch out for bad english and typos. These reviewers are usually international ones. Read all reviews, good and bad! Don't buy anything with less than 20 reviews. Less is not enough customers to know it will work well over time! Be sure there are reviews over 5 years old. Any less is likely it won't last that long or company is "Brand-Swapping" to bury old reviews Bad reviews? Might be the next target of Amazon shutdown of brands (Last one was over 600 Chinese brands kicked off Amazon!) If the company disappears, gone is any hope of a Warranty. Look for the word "BEWARE" or "Do NOT buy from this seller" in reviews.. or BOTH!

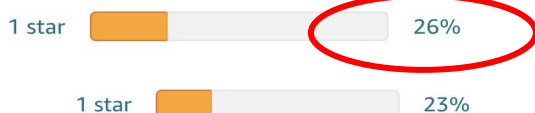


2. Percentage % of 1 star reviews

Avoid anything with higher than a few % of 1 Star Reviews. Companies and products can't make everyone happy but it should be well over 95% happy customers! 25% or greater is basically a scam. Warranty rates of a well made product should be less than a few %.

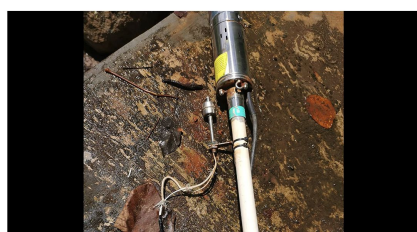
Review: 1 star: "Broke after 2 days.....no response from company"

Review: 1 star: "I thought this pump was a real WINNER, until it corroded one week later and quit working"

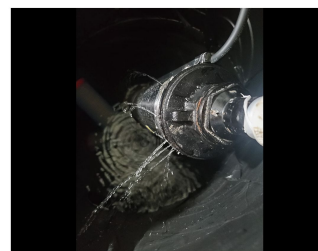


3. Customer photos, real installs

Ask for photos from the company of successful installs (there should be hundreds) See if they have videos on how in install, troubleshoot etc. In English. Poor Amazon Customer Review Install photos say it all!



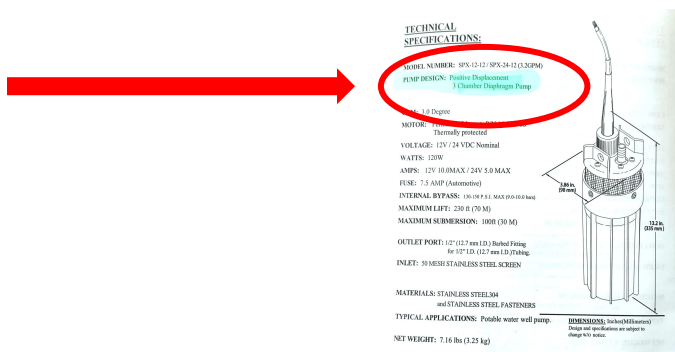
★★★★★ The controller failed. Well contact won't work.
By Amazon Customer on September 16, 2022
After 10 months of installation the well float failed and also the controller won't trigger the proper stop logic. It will lock on one position regardless of the float position. Sadly unable to find a controller replacement. Won't buy again.
Images in this review



bsystem
★★★★★ Defective and company non-existent
Reviewed in the United States on October 16, 2022
I'll suggest that everyone do the test I did (as shown in image). That is a manufacturing flaw and likely inherent in all "Happybuy's" pumps. Your pressure tanks will run too often from this leak in PSI. "Happybuy" also appears to simply be a front: no email, no phone, no address.
Images in this review

4. Product listings details & false claims

Review: 1 star: "FALSELY ADVERTISED PUMP. IT'S NOT AN IMPELLER PUMP AS IMAGE AND INFO SHOW. IT'S A DIAPHRAGM PUMP!"



5. Images not to scale!

Watch out for deceptively 'photoshopped' images That make products look bigger. Be sure to read Actual dimensions and not 'box' dimensions.

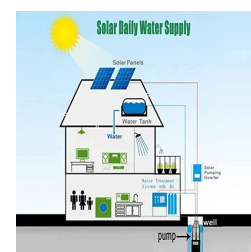
Keith Kubicek

☆☆☆☆☆ not for 4 inch wells

Reviewed in the United States on March 19, 2020

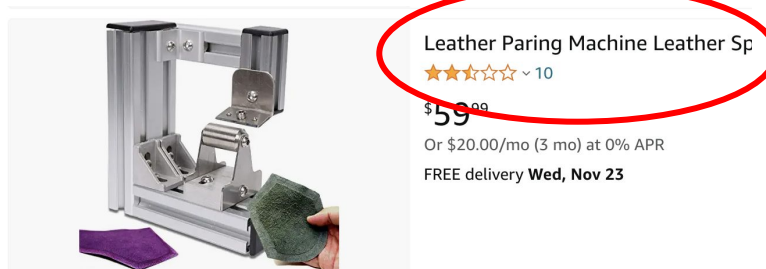
Verified Purchase

US. Buyer beware: This pump is about 4" OD, it would not fit inside my 4" ID well.



6. Market "Seller" generalist offerings

Make sure "Sold by" and Manufacturer or Advertised brand name are the same! Click on "Other Products" on the sellers page and see what else is there. This seller that 'specializes in solar pumps' had 390 other products like car parts and a cheap bbq and a leather paring machine with 2 stars. With terrible reviews!



7. Phone number! For Customer support & questions

Be sure they list a phone number to call if you need help. Call that number and ask for help determining if the pump is correctly sized. CALL THEM and see if they pick up their phone— these are the same people that will be supporting you when the pump doesn't work.

Have a question for ZYIY-pumps?

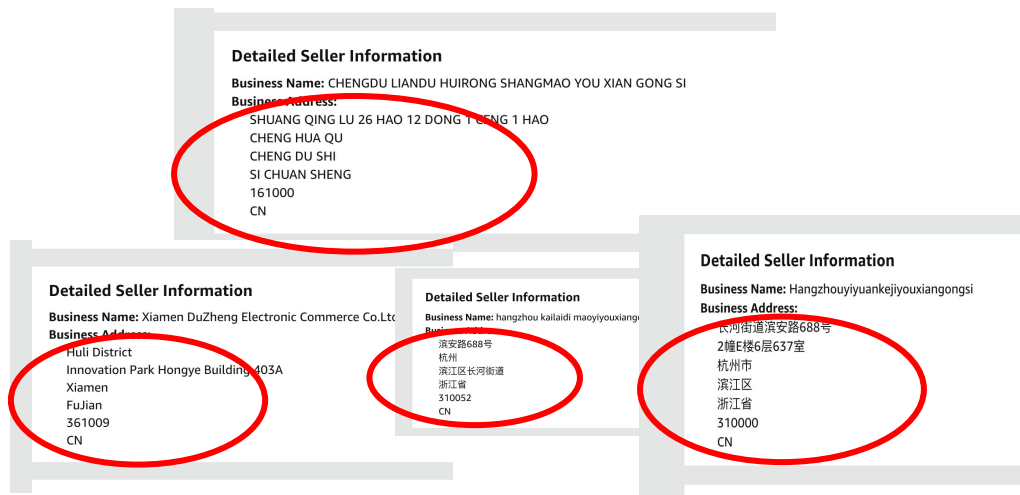
Ask a question

Customer Service Phone: +8618158510385

Phone number in China!

8. Company address

Click on the Seller name or "Sold by" name in Amazon and look for address. Make sure its a real address in USA! (that is also where you are sending your money and generally won't get a refund if it's overseas) It's where any warranty replacement parts might come from too so expect international to mean weeks not days.



9. Warranty claims, terms and conditions

Demand the warranty is written down - get it as a pdf or printed out. Amazon will often say "on manufacturers website" when the company doesn't even have a website! That means no real warranty, folks.

- **[4-Year Warranty]** Your First Choice: We always pay attention to customer shopping experience. If you have any questions during use, please feel free to contact with us at the first time. We will always be here.

› See more product details

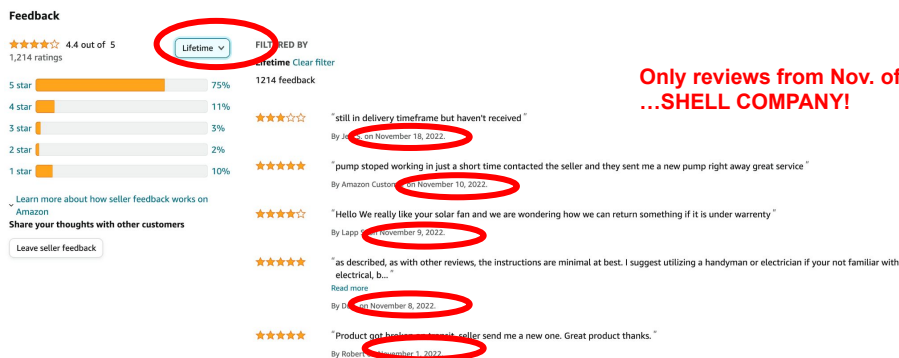


Please contact the seller directly for warranty information for this product. You may also be able to find warranty information on the manufacturer's website.

Company has NO WEBSITE or contact info!!

10. Time in business

If it's not more than a year AVOID purchasing from the seller, but 5+ years shows a track record of good products and good support.



Only reviews from Nov. of this year ...SHELL COMPANY!



11. Pictured vs Included

Double check and look out for broken parts or mention of missing components in reviews. Ask for a physical catalog mailed to you. Every reputable company should have one.

What 30 GPM?!
Real Life Customer Tested at 1.5 GPM Max



Broken parts

Pure Copper Motor

The high-efficiency motor provides strong kinetic energy for machines. Permanent magnet thermal protection system ensures safety.

Discharge (GPM)	20'	25'	10'	15'	20'
Gallons Per Minute	30.8	20.1	22.3	16.3	9.2
Per Hour	1825	1400	975	975	550

Roll over image to zoom in

KEN ELLIOTT

★★★★★ NOT WHAT SHOWS ON PIC

Reviewed in the United States on August 16, 2019

Verified Purchase

IN THE PIS YOU ORDER FROM HAS A ROLL OF CABLE THATS 150 FEET LONG AND SAYS IS COMES WITH 150 FOOT CABLE AND IT COMES WITH A 3 1/2 FOOT CABLE .

12. Materials & metal types

Avoid anything that is half plastic or half leather - you want all metal! LOOK FOR BENT SHEET METAL PARTS - likely not stainless either. Look for hardware that is clearly not stainless on a product. Zoom in and check it out in detail! Make sure they tell you that they are 304 or 316 stainless (and that it doesn't look thin in the photos) Be wary of plastic and plastic controllers and any plastics without NSF approval for drinking and household water.

REVIEW: "The "good price" was simply too much money for only a week of service. And I thought the ad was deceptive when it said, "Stainless Steel." I have seen stainless steel prevent corrosion before, but this is not the quality I was led to believe it was."



★★★★★ Complete Garbage

By Molly on August 11, 2021

This pump is complete garbage. Got stuck in my 4" well because the wire cover came off, held on by two dinky metal pieces screwed in, couldn't get it out, after pulling and pushing intermittently for a week, finally got it loose enough to pull it out. When I pulled it out it was rusting already, not what you want to see in a submersible pump. Cheap Chinese Crap!

When attempting to use galvanized steel and screw in piping, the threaded top snapped like a piece of pottery, buy a quality pump for a little more, don't waste your money, time, energy.

Garbage should stay in the garbage!

Images in this review

CHEAP pot metal, NOT Stainless Steel!!!



Mumusuki Stainless Steel Water Pump Deep Well Pump Submersible Pump with Stainless Steel Fasteners (Orange)

\$143⁴²

NO REVIEWS

FREE delivery Dec 6 - 23

13. Company website or "Alibaba" page?

Google the company name and be sure they have a website at the very least. Watch out for Made-in-china.com and Alibaba.com pages as they are surely not a US company that is going to support you over the long haul. Websites should have VIDEOS and USA phone numbers and product information, manuals and help sections!

<https://grandfarpump.en.alibaba.com>

Zhejiang Grandfar Pump Industry Co., Ltd. - Alibaba.com

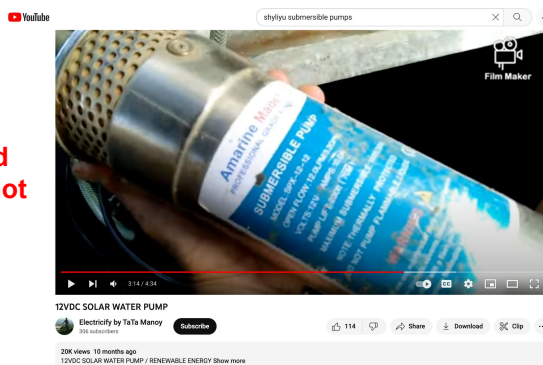
Zhejiang Grandfar Pump Industry Co., Ltd. Experts in Manufacturing and Exporting Water pumps and 0 more Products.

Zhejiang Granfar Pump has no website.

14. Videos without audio or text overlay not spoken English?

Beware of videos that don't have spoken words and overlaid text. That is not an English speaker and that is also going to be the person helping you if you need it. Ask for photos from the company of successful installs (there should be hundreds) See if they have videos on how to install, troubleshoot etc. In English.

Two different brand names and video not in English



15. Typos and bad translations from Chinese

Look for bad translations and misspelled words. That's a sign you are not going to get support in any way you can understand!

2HP Submersible Well Pump

Copper Motor & Filtration Mesh & Large Flow

This submersible pump, manufactured from 304 stainless steel, is a durable well pump that will keep you in use for a couple of years. In addition, this deep well pump provides you with an advanced flow rate, producing a consistent flow up to quite a depth under the surface. With this deep well pump, you can quickly and conveniently get water even from greater depths.

Coal Powered Solar Pump?!

Power Source: Charcoal, Air Powered

✓ Anti-Dry-Burning

???

16. Social Proof vs. Fraud

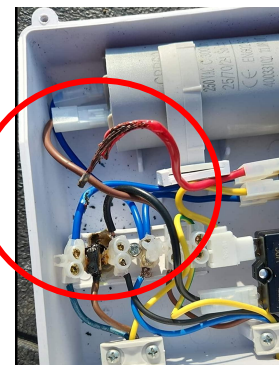
Fake reviews and paid reviews are how disposable companies on Amazon try to gather social proof for customers to depend on. Beware of anything that doesn't read like English or is too short and 5 stars. Most people leave more than a few words with a good review. Fake and "paid" reviews plague Amazon - don't fall for them!

17. Electrical parts

CAUTION!!! Many cheap Amazon pumps have reviews of faulty and melted wiring or exposed electrical elements not rated for water submersion. Electrical parts can catch fire, cause burns and electrocution and aren't something you want to mess around with!

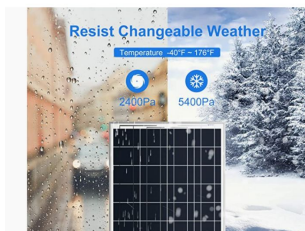
Jess W
★☆☆☆ **Wiring Melted**
Reviewed in the United States on August 12, 2021
Verified Purchase
The wiring and control box that came with this pump are too small. Melted right off the get go! Pump rusted in a matter of days as well. Sent it back. Still waiting for refund!

Tyler Brown
★☆☆☆ **Fried wires**
Reviewed in the United States on July 22, 2022
Verified Purchase
Wires in the control box keep burning up. Pump will run well for a couple hours until another original wire burns up.



18. Solar Panel shortcuts

Ensure the voltage range of the controller will work for any solar panels. We recommend MONO-crystalline solar panels - split cell panels are better with bird poop. Polycrystalline is lower efficiency material. But cheaper so it's a common shortcut.



ACOPOWER Solar Panel 100 Watt 12 Volt PV Module High-Efficiency Polycrystalline Power Charger for Car RV Marine Boat Rooftop Charging Home Farm Camping Battery Caravan and Other Off-Grid Applications
Visit the ACOPOWER Store
★★★★☆ 124 ratings
Deal
-16% **\$83.93**
List Price: \$99.99
FREE Returns

NOT POLYCRYSTALLINE!!



NO THIN FILM!

19. Avoiding 12V

Don't trust anything too low voltage. 12v is not ideal as it means to get power to the pump you have to have more current. Higher current and lower voltage means more voltage drop and loss over a length of wire. Best to have at least 24v or 48v so you have half or a quarter of the current!

WE RECOMMEND AT LEAST 24V



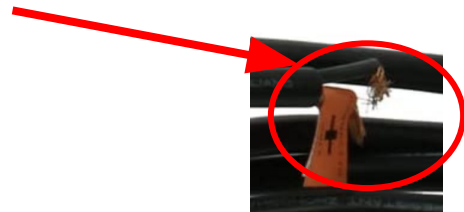
Pumplus 100W Deep Well Submersible Pump Kit, 12V DC Water Pump + 100W Solar Panel & 18Ah Battery Box for Deep Well, Irrigatio...



20. Avoid 2 strand wire

It's usually 14 gauge or metric and less, not rated for submersion or drinking water! 2 strand wire often indicates a brushed motor too which is not rated for continuous duty, overheats easily and wears out far too fast for use in a well.

21. Be sure controller is metal and waterproof, not plastic with cheap indoor components like these little switches. Water will penetrate these and you'll be dead in the water.



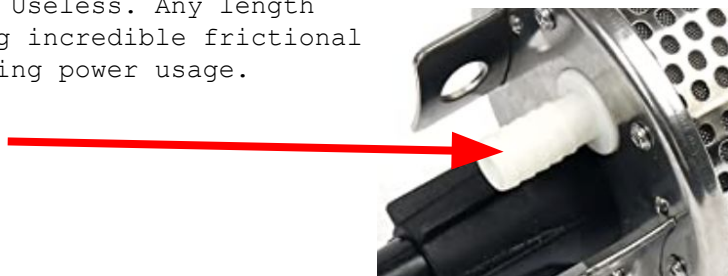
22. **Submersion depth** - be sure you have this documented. Some are only 15 feet. This impacts what percentage of your water column in your well you can use. It also demonstrates some level of thought and design.

23. **Continuous Duty!!** Double check! Avoid 'Brushed' DC motors as they will not last and will overheat.

REVIEW: "Total crap. On my second pump and controller. Still doesn't work. Now company says it is not meant to work continuously. According to their directions I have it on a five hour schedule. Their directions are somewhat difficult to understand and communications are like talking to a five year old. "

24. **Avoid plastic parts, especially a plastic hose barb, they will break.**

The model pictured here is only 1/2" too! Useless. Any length Of 1/2' tubing over 10' and you are adding incredible frictional loss and reducing flow rate and increasing power usage.



25. NRCS Grant Funding Considerations

Make sure it will be approved for NRCS grant funding if you are attempting to get the system paid for by the NRCS. There are lots of guidelines in their 533 doc - so you can find that online and make sure all the requirements are met. We don't know of anything on Amazon that has ever been approved. Ask manufacturer for documentation for NRCS to be sure!

Dear Customers,

In an effort to shape the way our company does business, our mission statement includes a series of pledges to you, our customers.

We pledge to give you the power! Controlling your own ability to pump water out of the ground, whether in the field or at home, allows you to be more resilient. Freeing your water source from the grid is a major step towards self-sufficiency. You just bring the DIY spirit! Our engineers will be on the other end to offer specialized knowledge and answer questions, so you can install our solar pumps confidently and gain total control over your water supply.

We pledge to be a company our grandfathers would have trusted. The all-too-common practice of outsourcing customer support after the sale is one we wholeheartedly oppose. We are an American, family-run company and our USA engineers, who will support you before and after the sale, are the best in the industry. And have grown every year since our founding in 2014. We gain most of our business from word-of-mouth as a result of treating customers with respect and standing by our products.

No Pressure. Ever. Our sales team is not on commission – we think this is important. Their role is to match you with the right pump for your well. If we don't have a pump that will suit your needs, we'll help you find a solution elsewhere. Our job is to help get you water, not sell you something that isn't a good fit.

We pledge to bring you reliable water! All manufactured products have occasional issues and we can't claim to be perfect. Well water varies in pH, iron level, and sand content. With that said, we are extremely proud of our near 100% track record in getting our customers water. Almost every single one of our customers is now successfully pumping water with an RPS system. This starts with making sure we supply you with the right pump for your land, and if issues do arise, we will immediately provide technical support and replacement parts so you can get up and pumping again as quickly as possible.

We are honored to serve you.

Sincerely,
The RPS Family