What Role Does Your Business Have in Protecting Drinking Water Sources?

EPA New England

April 2000 EPA-901-F-00-001

What Affects Your Drinking Water?

Communities across New England, from small rural villages to major metropolitan areas, depend on lakes, reservoirs, rivers and ground water wells for their sources of drinking water. If existing or new sources of pollution make the water undrinkable, a community may have to decide between building a new or expanded treatment system, or finding an entirely new drinking water source. Both choices can be very expensive and these costs are often passed on to consumers. These costs may be avoided through protecting a community's drinking water source in the first place.

❍ Citizens, federal, state and local governments, water suppliers, and businesses each have a role in keeping their drinking water safe.

❍ Many commercial or industrial activities involve materials, such as chemicals or fuel, that if mishandled can pollute drinking water. The sites where these activities occur are *potential* sources of drinking water contamination.

❍ **Good management practices (see "Common Sense Tips" list) by businesses reduce the risk that contaminants could get into sources of drinking water through spills, floor drains, septic systems, and rainwater runoff.**

What Is The New Program To Protect Drinking Water?

The Source Water Assessment Program

In 1996, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was revised to encourage protection of drinking water sources by increasing local awareness of drinking water needs. Your state is now working with local water suppliers to assess how susceptible drinking water sources are to contamination and will soon share this information with each community. In cooperation with public advisory committees, your state developed a plan for carrying out its assessment, which includes these four steps:

1 Determine where the public water system gets its water and identify the land area that if polluted, could affect the water source.

2 Inventory potential sources of contaminants within that land area using existing data and when possible, collecting more information as needed from the water supplier, community groups, municipal boards, and businesses.

3 Use geographic conditions and the potential sources of contamination identified, to determine how susceptible the drinking water source is to being contaminated in the future.

4 Provide a written assessment (and usually a map) describing potential sources of contamination for each drinking water system to the water supplier, municipal officials, and the public.

How Do These Assessments Relate To Your Business?

❍ The assessments will provide essential information to communities, and be used to make decisions on how to protect drinking water sources.

❍ Businesses that are located within a drinking water protection area may be identified, directly or indirectly, in the assessments as potential sources of contamination. Your state and water supplier will explain the difference between a *potential* source of contamination and a *known* source of contamination.

❍ You can demonstrate your business's commitment to the community's safe drinking water by carrying out practices that minimize the risk of contamination. Many businesses, such as restaurants, motels, and trailer parks, maintain public water systems, so they will want to be doubly sure that they are protecting their own sources of drinking water.

❍ Check to see if your business is located in a drinking water protection area and whether it's a potential source of pollution. If so, talk to your local water supplier to be sure you are taking all precautions to protect the drinking water. As the assessments are released, you can let your customers know what you are doing to protect their water.

Common Sense Tips To Protect Drinking Water Sources

The Basics

❍ Train employees to reduce use of toxic chemicals.

❍ Use the least hazardous chemicals available.

❍ Inspect vehicles regularly. Watch for oil or antifreeze leaks.

❍ Use as few lawn chemicals as possible.

❍ Pump your septic system regularly.

Storage

❍ Store potentially harmful substances on a paved surface. Use secondary containment structures around storage containers for extra protection. Label containers clearly and visibly. Inspect storage areas and tanks weekly.

❍ Cover containers stored outside. Secure storage areas against unauthorized entry.

❍ Keep aboveground and underground storage tanks in good working order.

Chemical Handling and Disposal

❍ Keep containers closed and sealed.

❍ Use drip pans under spigots, valves, and pumps.

❍ Have spill control and containment equipment readily available.

❍ Use funnels and drip pans when transferring harmful substances.

❍ Recycle chemicals instead of discharging them.

❍ Do not discharge harmful substances or waste products into floor drains or work sinks that lead into or onto the ground.

Accident Preparedness

❍ Post information on what to do in the event of a spill. Also, coordinate with and post phone numbers for your fire chief, hazardous spill response hotline and water supplier.

Vehicles

❍ Inspect your vehicles regularly to be sure that they aren't leaking fluids like oil or antifreeze.

Did You Know That Your Business May Be Eligible To Receive An Award?

Since 1996, the EPA-New England Office and New England Water Works Association have been working with state drinking water programs and water suppliers to recognize businesses that are protecting drinking water sources. Many types of businesses, including manufacturers, retail stores, farmers, a golf course, and a nursery, have already received awards. For more information, contact Ted Lavery at
617-918-1683 or lavery.ted@epa.gov

Special Incentives For Small Businesses

Your small business can avoid costly penalties while protecting drinking water by identifying, promptly reporting and correcting any environmental violation found during on-site compliance assistance or a self-audit. For more information, contact Dwight Peavey at
617-918-1829 or peavey.dwight@epa.gov

For More Information:

Call your state's drinking water source protection coordinator:

Connecticut
Robert Hust (860-424-3718)

Maine
Andrews Tolman (207-287-6196)

Massachusetts
Ken Pelletier (617-348-4014)

New Hampshire
Sarah Pillsbury (603-271-1168)

Rhode Island
Clay Commons
(401-222-6867 x2237)

Vermont
Elizabeth Hunt (802-241-3409)

Or contact EPA-New England:
MaryJo Feuerbach
617-918-1578
feuerbach.maryjo@epa.gov

Is Your Business Connected To A Municipal Sewer ? If Not, You May Need To Know Your Role In Injection Well (Class V) Regulations

Find Out More About Class V Injection Wells And If Your Business Has One:

Class V Wells are commonly called "Shallow Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Systems". If your business's wastewater disposal system is not connected to a municipal sewer or a holding tank, or does not discharge to a surface water or land surface, you may have one.

These disposal systems include: septic systems **serving more than 20 people per day**, leach fields, leaching pits and trenches, drywells, cesspools and disposal wells. Fluid waste disposal is below the land surface and common waste fluids discharged include: liquid waste, process wastewater, non-contact cooling water, melt water, washwater, boilerwater, sewage and storm water. Waste streams usually contain non-hazardous waste; however, waste streams are often susceptible to contamination by hazardous wastes and hazardous materials.

What Are You Required By Law To Do?

- ❍ Call your state if you do not have permission to discharge commercial or industrial wastewater to your business' subsurface disposal system.
- ❍ Federal and state law prohibit discharge of hazardous wastes to a subsurface disposal system.
- ❍ As of April 2000, federal law prohibits discharge of sewage to cesspools that have the capacity to serve 20 or more people per day.
- ❍ As of April 2000, federal law prohibits the construction of new subsurface disposal systems used to discharge motor vehicle wastes.
- ❍ Report any hazardous substances discharged to your subsurface wastewater disposal system.

Why Are Class V Injection Wells A New England Drinking Water Concern?

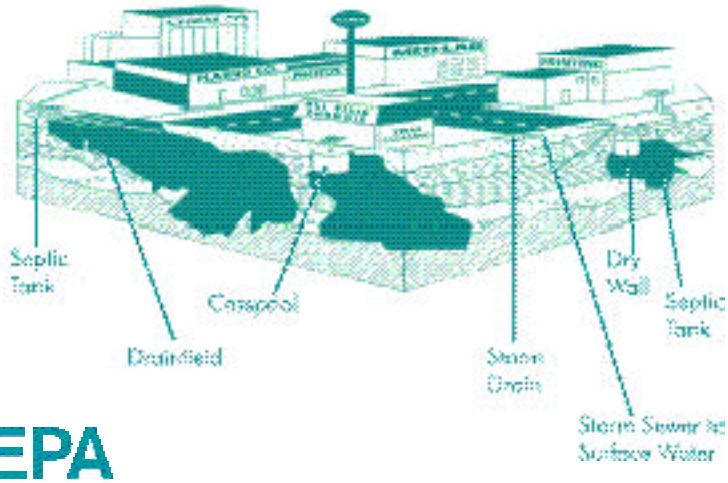
These disposal systems pose potential risk to New England sources of drinking water because:

- They are often located near public and private drinking water supplies.
- They are sometimes used to dispose of a wide range of non-hazardous and hazardous wastes.
- Fluid wastes discharged underground can contaminate drinking water sources.

Who Regulates These Systems And Who Should You Contact?

Each New England state is authorized to regulate subsurface wastewater disposal systems. State contacts are:

- CT DEP: Richard Mason 860-424-3018
- ME DEP: Tammy Gould 207-287-7814
- MA DEP: Andrew Durham 617-574-6855
- NH DES: Mitch Locker 603-271-2858
- RI DEM: Terry Simpson 401-222-2680 ext. 7602
- VT DEC: Allison Lowry 802-241-4455



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