

## **“Your Business, Shallow Injection Wells, and Sources of Safe Drinking Water”**

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### **Do You Know Where Your Drinking Water Comes From?**

Communities rural and metropolitan, depend on lakes, rivers and groundwater for their sources of drinking water. If pollution makes the water undrinkable, then a community may need to decide between remediation or finding a new drinking water source. Both choices can be expensive and these costs are often passed on to the consumer. How is water polluted and how can it be protected?

### **Shallow Injection Wells are Potential Sources of Contamination**

Shallow injection (Class V) wells are non-hazardous disposal systems, fluid wastes flow directly into the ground. Typical discharges include liquid waste, process wastewater, non-contact cooling water, melt, wash and boiler water, sewage and stormwater. Disposal systems include: septic systems serving more than 20 people per day, leach fields, leaching pits, trenches, dry wells, cesspools and disposal wells. If your business is not connected to a municipal sewer or a holding tank, or does not discharge to surface water or a land surface, you may have a shallow injection well. For more information on how a shallow disposal system on your property affects you, and underground sources of drinking water visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/uic/cl5oper/index.html>

### **What Are You Required to do by Law?**

Shallow injection wells need to be properly sited, constructed and operated to prevent contamination of groundwater. Most non-hazardous injection wells require authorization under general rules or specific permits through the Underground Injection Control (UIC) Program. For more information visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/uic.html>

As of April 2000 Federal law the construction of new large capacity cesspools is prohibited. Facilities are still able to use existing large capacity cesspools until April 5, 2005. As of that date, they are required to close them. If facilities opt to hook up to sewer or upgrade treatment, they are granted one additional year to close the cesspool. Individual cesspools that only receive domestic waste and serve fewer than 20 persons will still be allowed to operate. For more information visit

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/uic/c5imp.html>

Federal and state law prohibit discharge of hazardous water to a subsurface disposal system. Any hazardous substances discharged to your subsurface wastewater disposal system need to be reported.

### **How are Sources of Drinking Water Protected Today?**

In 1996, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was amended to encourage protection of the sources of drinking water. Each state is implementing a Source Water Assessment Plan to:

- Delineate the area supplying drinking water to each public water system (PWS);
- Inventory potential sources of contamination in the area;
- Determine the susceptibility of the PWS to contamination;
- Provide the results of the assessment to the public.

Most states have established Wellhead Protection Programs to protect groundwater supplies of drinking water.

For information on source water protection visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect.html>

To find your state source water protection contacts visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/contacts.html>

### **How Do These Assessments Relate to Your Business?**

Check to see where your business is located in relation to sources of drinking water and whether it's a potential source of pollution. Talk to your local water supplier and health department to determine the steps needed to protect water. Many business' such as motels, restaurants and trailer parks maintain public water systems and will want to be sure that they are protecting their source of drinking water. As the assessments are released, you can let your customers know what you are doing to protect their water. To check if your state or EPA has primary enforcement responsibility, or if your injection wells are covered by the UIC Program visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/uic/states.html>

Protection of the sources of our drinking water keeps our water clean, protects public health, and our environment. Communities with clean sources of drinking water attract business and investment. For information on your local drinking water visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo.htm>

### **Source Water Protection Tips**

- Use the least hazardous chemicals available.
- Inspect vehicles regularly. Watch for oil or antifreeze leaks.

- Use as few lawn chemicals as possible.
- Pump and maintain your septic system on schedule.
- Store potentially harmful substances on a paved surface.
- Use secondary containment structures around storage containers for extra protection.
- Label containers clearly.
- Regularly inspect storage areas and tanks.
- Cover containers stored outside.
- Keep above ground and underground storage tanks in good working order.
- Keep containers closed and sealed.
- Use drip pans under spigots, valves and pumps.
- Have containment spill control equipment readily available.
- Use funnels and drip pans when transferring harmful substances.
- Recycle chemicals instead of discharging
- Do not discharge harmful substances or waste into floor drains or work sinks that lead into or onto the ground.
- Train employees to reduce the use of toxic chemicals.
- Secure storage areas against unauthorized entry.
- Post information on what to do in the event of a spill.
- Coordinate with and post telephone numbers for the fire chief, hazardous spill response hotline and water supplier.

For a National Association of Counties Source Water Kit visit

<http://www.naco.org/programs/environ/water/source.cfm>

**For more information call the Safe Drinking Water Act Hotline at 800-426-4791**

