

Please Help Protect Drinking Water

Dear Homeowner, Resident, or Business Owner:

I would like to ask for your cooperation in helping to ensure safe drinking water for yourself and for the Winchester water system. The Winchester water system participates in a program at the N.H. Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) that requires the water supplier to implement a source protection program to prevent drinking water sources from becoming contaminated. Once a source becomes contaminated, it is very costly and sometimes impossible to correct. Therefore, I am writing to you because your property is located in the Source Water Protection Area (SWPA) for this water system as delineated by the NHDES. The SWPA is the area from which water – and any contaminants – are likely to flow to the water system's well or surface water source. Furthermore, even if your property is not served by this public water system, the water from the SWPA might flow to your well too.

Certain activities on your property can affect the quality of groundwater. Most people who have septic systems are aware that their septic system discharges to the ground and thus to groundwater. Similarly, any gasoline, motor oil, paint, garden chemicals, lawn chemicals, or other household chemicals that are spilled, sprayed, spread, or dumped onto the ground can make their way into groundwater. Because your property is within the SWPA for a public water system, activities on your property that affect groundwater can also affect the public water supply. And if your property uses an on-site well, your own water supply can be affected.

Fortunately, you can minimize the likelihood of groundwater contamination by following a few simple guidelines. Please take time to review and follow the information on the enclosed pamphlet, and make sure all family members, residents, or employees are aware of them. By following these tips, you can help minimize the potential for contamination of groundwater, your drinking water supply, and the public drinking water supply.

We need your help to protect this valuable source of drinking water. The management and users of this public water supply appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions about this letter, the enclosed pamphlet, or the protection of groundwater and drinking water, please contact me at 603.239.4951 x4. You may also contact the NHDES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at 603-271-2513 for additional information.

Sincerely,

Danielle Meleski, Admin Assistant
Winchester water system

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

DWGB-12-12

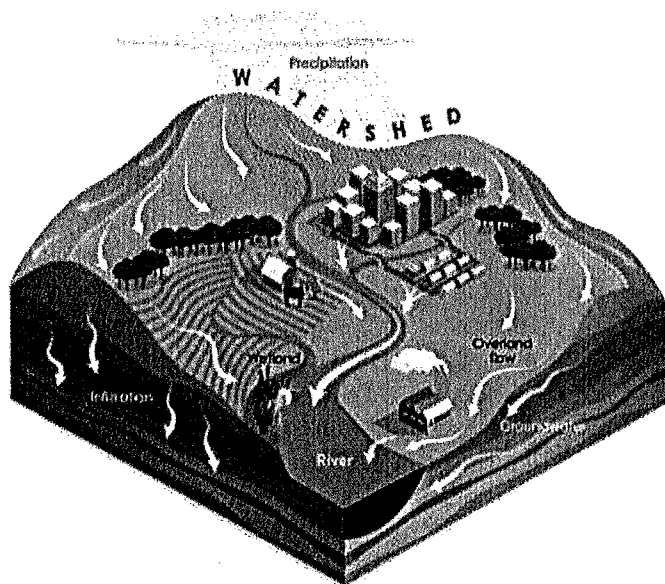
2024

Clean Drinking Water: It's Up to You!

Why do you need to help protect drinking water?

Your drinking water comes from a groundwater or surface water source, both of which can be vulnerable to contamination from routine household activities. As water flows through the watershed, it can pick up contamination along the way. While some pollutants can be filtered out by soil, groundwater can be easily contaminated by a variety of chemicals. Surface water can be contaminated by soil erosion and pollutants picked up as water flows over land. A little bit of pollution can affect a lot of water.

To access an electronic version of this fact sheet (with live links), use this QR code.



What can you do to help prevent contamination of drinking water sources?

- **Dispose of Waste Properly**
 - Visit the [NHDES "Managing My Waste" website](#) for information on how to dispose of different types of household waste.
 - Utilize [household hazardous waste](#) collection days to dispose of hazardous wastes, such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, batteries, cleaning fluids, paint thinners and thermometers.
 - Recycle used motor oil at a municipal solid waste transfer station that accepts [used oil](#).
 - Dispose of unused medicine properly; do not flush it down the toilet. Police Departments throughout the state have implemented a [prescription drug drop box program](#).
- **Use Safer Chemicals at Home, Work and School**
 - Consider switching to [non-toxic and less-toxic alternatives](#) to traditional household chemicals, some of which may inadvertently contain chemicals like [PFAS](#).
 - There are [simple recipes](#) for kitchen and bathroom cleaners made from things like white vinegar and baking soda that are cost-effective and environmentally friendly.
 - The [EPA Safer Choice Program](#) has a list of household and business cleaning products that use safer ingredients. [PFAS Central](#) has a list of products that are likely PFAS-free.
 - Only buy what you need—avoid buying and storing large volumes of materials that may go unused.

- The NHDES [Greening Your Home website](#) has many useful links for ways to reduce waste and improve energy efficiency.
- **Maintain Your Septic System**
 - If your house is on septic, [regular maintenance of your septic system](#), including pumping the tank out every 3 years, is essential to its ongoing performance.
 - Any soggy areas around the system, or disagreeable odors, could indicate septic system failure. Have it checked by a professional.
 - Do not dispose of any toxic materials into the system. When in doubt, don't flush it.
- **Properly Store Gasoline and Oil at Your Home**
 - Check all fuel storage tanks for leaks. If a tank is more than 20 years old, consider replacing it with an aboveground storage tank that has a concrete slab underneath it, a cover and secondary containment.
 - [NHDES Safe Tank Program](#) can provide financial assistance to upgrade or replace home heating oil tanks.
 - Perform any refueling and engine work on an impervious surface like a concrete floor. Avoid any refueling in areas near surface water or wells.
 - Keep cat litter or absorbent pads available and soak up any gas spills immediately.
 - Contact NHDES and/or your local fire department or 911 to [report any oil or gas spills](#) that may have soaked into the ground. NHDES Spill Response can be reached at [\(603\) 271-3899](#).
- **Transform and Simplify Your Lawn Care**
 - Work with nature. The [NOFA Organic Landcare guide](#) provides many useful practices and tips for a healthy lawn which protects water. [Ahora disponible en español.](#)
 - Consider reducing lawn areas or replacing them with an alternative ground cover like wildflowers and native shrubs that require less maintenance and can benefit pollinators and other wildlife.
 - [Limit lawn fertilizer and herbicide/pesticide use](#), particularly near wells, lakes, rivers and streams. All of these chemicals can negatively impact drinking water sources. A single application of slow release, low phosphate fertilizer at the beginning of fall is adequate in most cases.
 - To help protect the environment and reduce fertilization costs, have your soil tested to determine if and what types of fertilizer are needed. You can have your soil tested by the [UNH Cooperative Extension](#).
 - For the healthiest lawn, support the soil that grows your lawn by applying compost to your lawn regularly. You can make your own compost with leaves, lawn clippings and kitchen scraps.
 - Be careful refueling your lawn equipment. During refueling, be sure to place the equipment on an impervious surface, such as a concrete floor or tarp so any spills don't soak into the ground.
 - Consider using hand tools instead of gas-powered machines (e.g., a rake instead of a leaf blower). It's good exercise and good for the environment.
 - If replacing your lawn equipment, consider purchasing an electric mower or trimmer instead of a gas-powered one.
- **During the Winter, Limit Salt Use on Sidewalks and Driveways**
 - Road salt contributes elevated sodium and chloride to rivers and groundwater, which can be harmful to aquatic life and humans.
 - Consider alternative de-icing materials, such as calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) or alfalfa meal, and/or using materials like sand, sawdust or cat litter to increase traction.
 - If you use a plowing company, request that they reduce/optimize their salt use and obtain the [Green Snow Pro certification](#).

For More Information

Please contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at [\(603\) 271-2513](#) or dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov or visit our website at www.des.nh.gov.

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of January 2024. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

DWGB 22-4

2020

Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Groundwater Protection

Approximately 75% of New Hampshire residents rely primarily on groundwater for their drinking water. Recognizing the importance of protecting the natural quality of groundwater, the legislature passed the Groundwater Protection Act (RSA 485-C) in 1991. This legislation recognized that a wide variety of activities involve the use of materials that can, if not properly handled, contaminate groundwater. There have been numerous instances of groundwater contamination in New Hampshire from leaking storage facilities, improper waste disposal, accidental spills and even from normal use of these materials. Potentially contaminating substances can be more safely managed if certain basic guidelines are followed. The Groundwater Protection Act directed the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to adopt rules specifying best management practices (BMPs) for the Potential Contamination Sources (PCSs) listed below.

NHDES developed and adopted New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules Part Env-Wq 401 Best Management Practices for Groundwater Protection, which apply to all potential contamination sources in the state. The BMPs within the rules are essentially common-sense operating practices that are simple and economical to implement. The purpose of the BMPs is to help prevent a release of regulated substances, as defined under this rule. Regulated substances include oil, as defined under RSA 146-A, III, regulated contaminants established pursuant to RSA 485-C:6, and hazardous substances listed under the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), within 40 CFR § 302. Cleaning up the release of a regulated substance can be very expensive. Following the BMP rules reduces environmental liability and minimizes potential cleanup costs.

Potential Contamination Sources (PCSs) ¹	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicle service and repair shops• General service and repair shops• Metalworking shops• Manufacturing facilities• Underground and above-ground storage tanks• Waste and scrap processing and storage• Transportation corridors• Septic systems (at commercial and industrial facilities)• Laboratories and certain professional offices (medical, dental, veterinary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of agricultural chemicals²• Salt storage and use• Snow dumps• Stormwater infiltration ponds or leaching catch basins• Cleaning services• Food processing plants• Fueling and maintenance of earth moving equipment• Concrete, asphalt, and tar manufacture• Cemeteries• Hazardous waste facilities
¹ As Identified in New Hampshire's Groundwater Protection Act (RSA 485-C)	
² Subject to BMPs developed and administered by N.H. Dept. of Food, Agriculture, and Markets	

Summary of BMP for Groundwater Protection Rules

Storage

- Store regulated substances on an impervious surface.
- Secure storage areas against unauthorized entry.
- Label regulated containers clearly and visibly.
- Inspect storage areas weekly.
- Durable cover over *regulated containers*¹ in outside storage areas.
- Keep regulated containers that are stored outside more than 50 feet from surface water and storm drains, 75 feet from private wells, and up to 400 feet from public wells.
- Secondary containment is required for regulated containers stored outside, except for on-premise use heating fuel tanks, or aboveground or underground storage tanks otherwise regulated.

¹Regulated container means any device in which a regulated substance is stored, transported, treated, disposed of, or otherwise handled, with a capacity of five gallons or more. The term does not include fuel tanks attached to and supplying fuel to a motor vehicle.

Handling

- Keep regulated containers closed and sealed.
- Place drip pans under spigots, valves, and pumps.
- Have spill control and containment equipment readily available in all work areas.
- Use funnels and drip pans when transferring regulated substances; perform transfers over impervious surface.

Release Response Information

- Post information on what to do in the event of a spill.

Floor Drains and Work Sinks

- Cannot discharge into or onto the ground.

For More Information

Please contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at (603) 271-2513 or dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov or visit our website at www.des.nh.gov.

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of September 2019. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.