



PROTECTING YOUR WELL AND DRINKING WATER

Improper maintenance or management of wells could result in contamination entering into your drinking water. Well owners can protect their drinking water by following a few of the suggested items below.

Well Landscaping & Building Considerations:

- When landscaping your yard, keep the top of the well at least 1 foot above the soil surface. Slope the soil away from the well casing to allow surface water to drain away from your well.
- Do not pile snow, leaves, or other materials around the well. This will help keep insects, dirt, and other contaminants from entering your well.
- Consider the location of your well when making physical changes to your property. Setback requirements from buildings and potential contaminant sources can be found in the Well Owner's Handbook (see link below)

Well Management & Maintenance:

- Seal unused wells. Unused or abandoned wells that have not been properly sealed can provide a direct pathway for contaminants to enter into the groundwater.
- When working near your well, be careful not to disturb or damage the well casing.
- Inspect your well regularly for physical changes or damage. Be sure the well cover or well cap on top of the casing is properly attached and in good condition. All connections to the cap should be watertight. If damage is detected, contact a licensed well driller to repair the well.
- Do not mix or work with hazardous chemicals like pesticides, fertilizers, paints or motor oil, near your well. Immediately clean up spills to prevent groundwater contamination.
- Take steps to prevent back-siphonage of material into your plumbing system and well. This can occur when there is a drop in water pressure and water or liquids are sucked back into the plumbing system and into your well. Situations to avoid include: 1) When connecting a hose to a faucet, do not submerge the hose in a laundry tub, chemical tank, container, or sprayer, and 2) When filling pesticide tanks or containers with water, avoid placing the hose inside the tank or container.

Well Water Quality & Monitoring:

- Most health related contaminants in water cannot be seen by the naked eye and do not relate to the clarity of your water. Have your water tested regularly for basic health related contaminants including coli form bacteria and nitrates.
- Monitor for changes in the color or smell of your water. Consult with a local health department official, well driller or softening company to determine necessary steps.

For More Information:

Minnesota Department of Health website: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/index.html>
Well Owner's Handbook: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/construction/handbook.pdf>