

DRINKING WATER THREATS:

Pesticides



FACT
SHEET

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Drinking Water Source Protection is a provincial program to protect our municipal drinking water sources from contamination and overuse.



Prevention is key

The application, handling and storage of pesticides in a vulnerable area such as the area around a municipal well in specific quantities can pose a threat to drinking water sources.

Pesticides when used on lawns, gardens and around the home can travel in runoff from rain into the streets and collect in storm drains.



Storm drains or catch basins, are the grates found along the roadside. They drain runoff water from our yards, driveways, sidewalks and roads, into a network of underground pipes, which lead to an outfall that drains into a local water body. In Sault Ste. Marie stormwater is not treated but flows directly from storm drains to our creeks and eventually into the St. Marys River.

Stormwater pollutants can deplete the oxygen required by fish and other aquatic organisms, contribute to an increase in silt and higher water temperatures, increase algae growth, and reduce the overall water quality.



Why Protect Sources of Drinking Water?

Source water refers to untreated surface water from lakes and rivers and groundwater aquifers from which we get the water to supply drinking water systems. We all have a responsibility to protect these drinking water sources now and in the future because certain activities, when carried out near drinking water sources, can pose a risk of contamination.

It sounds obvious...chemicals and other toxic substances could make our water undrinkable. It's far easier to prevent contamination than it is to clean it up. In fact, for some chemicals or substances, clean-up is practically impossible.

Water
is life.
Protect
Yours.



Managing the risk

When the Drinking Water Source Protection program began, a lot of research and study went into identifying the sensitive or vulnerable areas around municipal wells and surface water intakes.

A local Source Water Protection Plan is in place in Sault Ste. Marie and most municipalities across the province. These plans contain policies to manage risks such as the threat posed by the handling and storage of certain quantities of pesticides in areas around municipal wells.



Best Management Practices

Much can be done to prevent contamination of our drinking water supplies. If you must use pesticides follow these best management practices for safe handling and storage:

Best Management Practices

- Read the label thoroughly and be familiar with all precautions.
- Mix only the amount that you need for each application. Do not prepare larger amounts to store for possible future use.
- Use only for the purpose listed. Use only the amount directed, and under the conditions specified. Twice the amount will NOT do twice the job.
- Reduce storage needs by buying only the amount of pesticide that you will need during the current season when the pest is active.
- Keep all pesticides in a locked well-ventilated utility area or garden shed.
- Store pesticides out of reach of children and pets and away from places where flooding is possible or in places where they might spill or leak into wells, drains, groundwater, or surface water.
- Always store pesticides in their original containers, complete with its label.
- Inspect containers periodically for damage or leaks.



One Solution: Protecting Water Sources

Drinking Water Source Protection is the Ontario government's program to protect our sources of water so we have safe and abundant supplies. Its focus is on protecting municipal drinking water supplies.

Drinking Water Source Protection is legislated through the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. Under the *Act*, local Source Water Protection Plans were developed and are now in place across the province. They contain policies that safeguard our municipal drinking water sources. Some of the policies manage the risk posed by the handling and storage of chemicals and other toxic substances.

Property and business owners near municipal wells or surface water intakes need to pay special attention when it comes to protecting source water.

You can find out if you live or own property in a Highly Vulnerable Area by contacting your local Risk Management Official (RMO) or Risk Management Inspector (RMI).



How does this impact me?

If you live in a wellhead protection area, you have a special responsibility to be aware of your actions and how they can impact our water supplies ... a responsibility we hope you take personally. This responsibility also applies if you are leasing, renting or sub-letting the land. The decisions you make can affect the water coming out of the tap for you and your neighbours. Best management practices can improve water quality for future generations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT



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Sault Ste. Marie Region Source Protection Area

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