

What is Source Water?

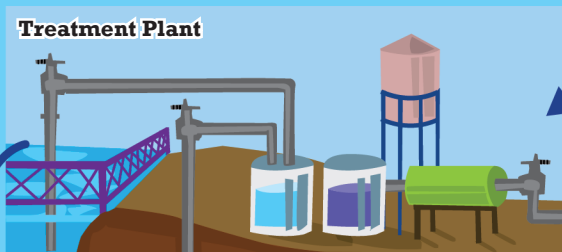


Source water is where our drinking water comes from. It can be surface water, such as lakes, rivers, bayous and streams, or groundwater, which is the water that gets trapped in the cracks and space between the soil. Rain and water that falls on the soil slowly seeps in and fills the empty spaces underground, constantly refilling the large underground pools of water referred to as aquifers.

Your water provider collects surface water or groundwater or a combination of both, then treats it for safety, taste, odor, and appearance and delivers clean water to your sink, shower, and home. The more effectively we protect these source waters, the better the quality of our drinking water.



Surface and Groundwater



Treatment Plant



Drinking Water Delivery

To Find Out More:

www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/sourcewater
www.SWAPTexas.org

Email: swpdata@tceq.texas.gov
Phone: 512-239-4691

Drinking Water Inventory and Protection Team, MC-155
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087

Report an environmental emergency, discharge, spill, or air release

State of Texas Spill-Reporting Hotline:
1-800-832-8224

Spills, Discharges, and Releases:
www.tceq.texas.gov/response/spills

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Response Center:
1-800-424-8802



Drinking Water Inventory and Protection Team
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

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PROTECT
YOUR WATER SOURCE

SOURCE WATER
PROTECTION PROGRAM

Polluted stormwater runoff has been identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the nation's main cause of water quality problems.

Many people who live within the boundaries of a source water are unaware and don't realize that their day-to-day activities can have an impact on the quality of that water. The things we do and the items we use every day are potential sources of contamination. However, there are steps you can take to help protect our source water.



Did You Know?



Four quarts of **oil** can cause an eight-acre oil slick if spilled or dumped down a storm drain. Just one quart of motor oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of drinking water.



Pet waste is a major source of bacteria that ends up in our streams. It contains as many as 75 diseases and viruses that may make our water unsafe for fishing, swimming, and other types of recreation.



Leaves and grass clippings that get blown into storm drains deplete oxygen levels in our rivers, streams, and lakes, harming aquatic life.



Washing cars on pavement carries detergent and chemicals directly into our storm drains and our water sources.



Nutrients from fertilizers, especially phosphorous, can run off into rivers, streams, and lakes and can stimulate the growth of algae. Excessive algae growth harms oxygen levels in lakes and ponds, endangering fish and other aquatic life.



Burning waste releases toxins which can sink into the groundwater and can be carried by stormwater runoff to rivers and lakes.



Private water wells provide access to the groundwater supply. If not properly maintained, the well can become a direct pathway for hazards, such as chemicals, animal waste, microorganisms, and heavy metals, to contaminate your drinking water source.



Signs of a failing septic tank system include the presence of wet areas above the leaching field and backing up of wastewater following periods of heavy rain.

What You Can Do to Help



- Use a pan to catch the old oil, and clean up any spills or drips immediately.
- Recycle motor oil and other vehicle fluids at an approved facility.
- Check your vehicles for leaks and repair them.



- Clean up after your pet – even in your own yard.



- Compost yard clippings and leaves. Don't blow them into the street.



- Use biodegradable or environmentally friendly soap.
- Take your vehicle to a car wash with a water recycle and filtration system.



- Reduce the amount of hazardous wastes used at home, such as excess paint, bleach, and fertilizer.
- Dispose of toxic and hazardous materials properly, such as at recycling centers and community collection days.



- Recycle materials such as paper, plastic, glass, and cardboard.
- Compost fruit and vegetable waste.



- Inspect your well: the casing should extend above the ground surface.
- Prevent water from flowing towards the well or ponding at its base.
- Keep pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals at least 100 feet away.
- Keep livestock and animal waste at least 50 feet away.



- Pump out your septic tank every two or three years.
- Do not dump things like paint, solvents, industrial cleaners, feminine products, diapers, pesticides, chemicals, grease, or oil down toilets or sinks.



Never dump anything that you wouldn't want to drink or swim in on the ground, onto the street, down a storm drain, or into a drainage ditch.



About the SWP Program

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) oversees the state's Source Water Protection (SWP) Program. It's a program designed to help water utilities identify potential sources of contamination and the best methods

to prevent pollution. After a system joins the SWP program, SWP can help a utility in public outreach efforts to encourage residents and business owners to take a more active role in preventing source water pollution.

Hundreds of public water supply companies have joined the SWP program since 1991. To learn more, including success stories from other utilities, visit www.SWAPTexas.org.

For questions about the program, call the TCEQ Water Supply Division at 512-239-4691 or email swpdata@teeq.texas.gov.