

Unit 5: What You Can Do To Help

In Pennsylvania, most of the groundwater is clean. However, groundwater faces a lot of different problems. Examples of problems that we've mentioned are hazardous wastes buried in old landfills, leaking storage tanks, runoff from paved areas, faulty septic systems, overused pesticides and fertilizers and industrial chemicals leaking out of disposal ponds.

These situations may already exist - BUT groundwater also faces some threats that we can help prevent. Here's what you can do:

Don't pour any toxic or hazardous substances (including paints, varnishes, thinners, waste oils, pesticides and herbicides) down the drain or into the toilet. For more information on household hazardous wastes, access the DEP internet website at www.dep.state.pa.us (directLink HHW).

If you change the oil in a car, take the time to find an oil collection center (at service stations) near you. That oil can be recycled. And if the oil is recycled, that means it won't end up in our groundwater. To find a collection center near you, call this toll-free number: 1-800-346-4242, or access the DEP internet website at www.dep.state.pa.us. (directLINK oil recycling).

Don't dump anything down a sinkhole!

When you use fertilizers or pesticides, follow the directions. When you're through with the product, read the label again to see how to dispose of the container. Some of these products can be toxic, so you have to be careful how you throw away the containers. If the label doesn't tell you the proper way to dispose of the container, ask your local agriculture extension office, Department of Agriculture, health department or DEP.

For anyone with wells: Be very careful what you store near a well. Don't store fertilizers, pesticides, oil, gasoline or diesel fuel within 20 feet of a well. Don't even use fertilizers and pesticides within 20 feet of a well. Don't dump any kind of wastes near a well. And don't build livestock pens or barns near a well.



Use only the amount of pesticide or fertilizer recommended by the product label; overuse can contaminate water supplies. And never dump toxic substances into household plumbing. They can pass through a septic system or sewage treatment plant and contaminate water supplies.