

Your home and source water protection

Drinking water sources or source water includes untreated water from ground water, streams or lakes. This water is used to supply both private wells and municipal drinking water systems.

To ensure that drinking water is as clean and as safe as possible, it is important to prevent contamination at the source. Pollutants in source water put stress on the natural environment and require expensive treatment to remove. It is less expensive to prevent pollutants from entering our drinking water than treating them, also some pollutants cannot be removed from the water. Without source water protection, a new source may have to be found, adding to the cost of the water system in our communities. It is also important to make sure there is enough water for private and municipal drinking water systems.

What activities at my home might cause a threat to source water quality?

Many residential activities may pose a threat to the protection of our drinking water sources. Common practices such as on-site septic systems, home heating fuel oil tanks, fertilizer, household cleaners, pesticides and handling of gasoline, diesel, solvents and other



products may lead to contamination from leaking, spillage and poor handling/disposal practices.

Within Wellington County, the most common residential activities that may cause a threat to drinking water are on-site septic systems and home heating oil tanks. Depending on how close your house is to a municipal well, you may be required to have regular inspections of

WE SUGGEST B.U.D.

Follow Wellington County's Household Hazardous Waste suggestion of BUD: **Buy** only what you need – **Use** it up – **Dispose** of any remaining product responsibly.

both your septic and home heating oil tank.

There are two groups of hazardous liquids that may put our drinking water sources at risk: dense non-aqueous phase liquids (DNAPLs) and organic solvents.

DNAPLs are liquids that are denser than water and as a result, they sink down into the ground, which contaminates water sources. These types of contaminants can be harmful to human health and are also difficult to be cleaned out of the water source at municipal water treatment systems.

This is why it is so important to keep these materials out of the water in the first place. Organic solvents are liquids

FACT SHEET 5 RESIDENTIAL



that are made from oil-based products and are often used to dissolve other substances (for example, paint thinners and nail polish removers). These hazardous liquids should be kept out of the water supply system and you can help.

These liquids may be in products that you use regularly in your home, for example:

- Paints, stains, and coatings
- Paint removers, paint strippers
- Wood treatment products
- Nail polish removers
- Spot removers and rug-cleaning fluids
- Adhesives
- Batteries
- Printing inks
- Cleaning and degreasing products
- Pesticides

It is important to make sure that none of these products enter the water system or are spilled on the ground. By following a few basic rules (BUD), this can be managed quite easily by homeowners.

To make things easier for the homeowner, the County of Wellington

offers several options for household hazardous waste material disposal throughout the year. There are household hazardous waste depots open year-round at Belwood, Elora, Aberfoyle and Harriston and in addition, there are household hazardous waste events held across the County at different times through the year. Check out the Household Hazardous Waste site at www.wellington.ca for more information.

Managing risk on your property

Residential areas near municipal wells or other vulnerable areas need special attention when it comes to protecting source water. If your residential property falls within vulnerable Wellhead Protection Areas or Intake Protection Zones, you will need to review your current practices in terms of handling, storing and disposal of fuels, motor oil, paints, or other household hazardous waste. In particular, home heating fuel oil tanks and septic systems may be regulated under the Clean Water

Act if your property is located in the most vulnerable municipal Wellhead Protection Areas or Intake Protection Zones (score of 10). See fact sheet #2 on septic systems for more information regarding septic system inspections. For home heating fuel oil tanks, a risk management plan may be required if you meet a certain threshold. A local Source Water Protection Risk Management Official is available to visit your property to help you to assess any practices that may need to change in order to protect local water quality. To find out if your residential property falls within a vulnerable area like a wellhead capture zone, visit www.wellingtonwater.ca or contact your source protection Risk Management Official.

For more information, contact:

Wellington Source Water Protection,
7444 Wellington Road 21, Elora, ON
Tel: 1-844-383-9800
Email: sourcewater@centrewellington.ca
Website: www.wellingtonwater.ca
Or your local municipal office.

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