

Groundwater and Sewage Systems

Many contaminants introduced into groundwater by industrial, commercial, agricultural, and residential activity can contaminate the source of our drinking water supplies. Most contamination comes from improper waste disposal, and septic tanks are the primary contributors to the total volume of wastewater discharged directly into the ground.

In West Virginia, approximately 7,000 septic tanks are installed per year. When a system is improperly placed, installed, or maintained, inadequately treated waste can move directly into groundwater. Untreated domestic wastewater can contain harmful substances like viruses, bacteria, nitrates, synthetic detergents and chlorides. Elevated levels of these in drinking water wells can pose a threat to human health and the environment.

The Groundwater Protection Act (1991)

This legislation protects existing groundwater quality and establishes a comprehensive management program. Financial support of the program is provided by law through groundwater protection fees on activities and facilities that may affect groundwater quality.

The fees are listed in the Groundwater Protection Act Fee Schedule (Title 47, Series 55, Legislative Rules of the Department of Environmental Protection), which went into effect in 1993, and was reauthorized in 1994.

NOTE: All subsurface release of fluids, waste or not, are subject to the requirements of the Underground Injection Control (UIC) rule. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned the construction of new **large capacity cesspools** and **motor vehicle waste disposal wells** nationwide in 2000.

EPA defines **large capacity cesspools** as any residential cesspool for the disposal of sanitary wastes from a multiple dwelling, community or regional system or from any non-residential cesspool that discharges solely sanitary waste and has the capacity to serve twenty (20) or more people per day (e.g. a duplex, apartment building, mobile home park, rest stop, restaurant, or church).

Motor vehicle waste disposal wells are shallow waste water disposal systems (septic systems, cesspools, or dry wells) that receive or have received fluids from vehicle repair or maintenance activities, often through floor drains or wash basins or wash drains in the service facilities.

Facilities that might have a **motor vehicle waste disposal well** include: service stations, auto body repair shops, new or used auto dealerships, specialty repair shops such as transmission, brake and muffler repair, fire stations, county, state or municipal garages, or any facility that performs vehicle repair work.

A copy of the Groundwater Protection Act (Chapter 22-12) and the Groundwater Protection Act Fee Schedule (Title 47, Series 55) may be obtained from the Secretary of State, Administrative Law Division, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. The rule is also available on the web at www.state.wv.us/csr or call: (304) 558-6000.

Sewage System Registration Fees

The Groundwater Protection Act Fee Schedule applies to any person who obtains an on-site sewage disposal system installation permit. The owner of the sewage system is required to pay a \$30 registration fee for each tank in the system.

When the fee is paid to the DEP's Division of Water and Waste Management, the system owner receives a registration seal for each tank installed, valid for the life of the system.

To purchase the seal, complete the attached registration form and return with a check or money order for \$30 (payable to the Department of Environmental Protection) to the address on the registration form.

For more information:

Division of Water and Waste Management (304) 926-0495

Sewage System Owners Responsibilities

The sewage system owner is responsible for:

- purchasing the seal
- attaching the seal to the Sewage Disposal Installation permit within 60 days of receipt of the permit from the county Health Department

Failure to obtain a seal subjects the property owner to civil administrative penalties, civil penalties or criminal penalties as provided in Section 10 of the Groundwater Protection Act.

Determining Compliance

The DEP's Division of Water and Waste Management will coordinate with the Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health to identify persons who hold a Sewage Disposal Installation Permit, but have not obtained a registration seal. These persons will be subject to appropriate enforcement action as specified by the law.

Mail to: DEP Division of Water and Waste Management, Groundwater Program UIC, Sewage System Seal Registration
601 57th Street SE, Charleston, WV 25304

Sewage System Registration Form

- A \$30 check payable to the Department of Environmental Protection for the sewage system registration seal is enclosed.
- My Sewage Disposal Installation Permit No. is _____
- The county in which the sewage system is to be installed is _____

Sewage System Owner (please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone (business): _____

Phone (home): _____

