



PROTECT YOUR WATER SOURCE

SOURCE WATER ASSESSMENT &
PROTECTION PROGRAM



Clean drinking water is an essential part of life.

Keeping it clean is not just the responsibility of the state and your water provider.

You also play an important part.

Whether your water comes from surface water (lakes, rivers, or streams) or groundwater (aquifers), all drinking water sources are vulnerable to contaminants from a variety of everyday activities. The origin of contaminants might be in your neighborhood or many miles away. When rain falls, it picks up and carries away pollutants, depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coasts, and even underground sources of drinking water.

Preventing pollution not only protects public health, it is also far more cost effective than cleaning up a contaminated water source. Join others in your community by taking the first step toward protecting your unique water sources.

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 the 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.

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

Nutrients from fertilizers – usually phosphates – enter rivers and streams and stimulate the growth of algae. Excessive algae growth harms oxygen levels in lakes and ponds, endangering fish and other aquatic life.

Steps You Can Take

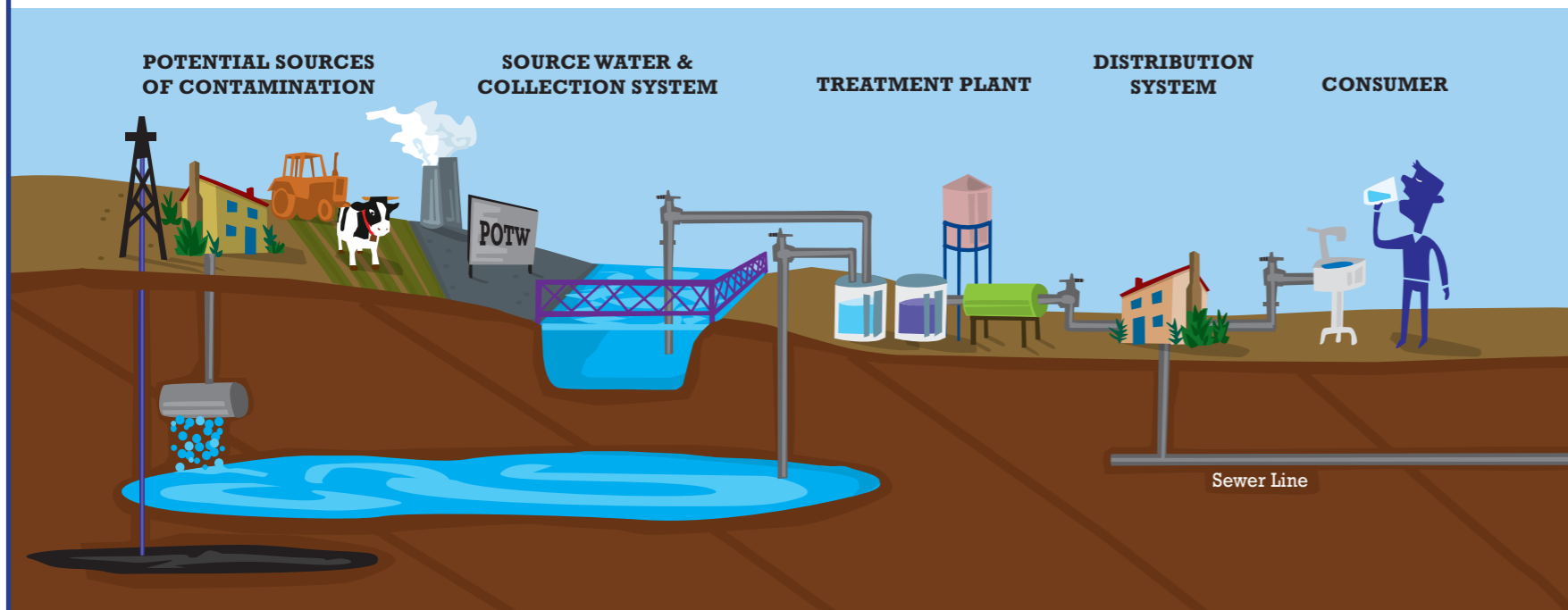
Protecting Your Water:

- 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.
- Recycle motor oil and other vehicle fluids.
- Throw litter in its place.
- Clean up after your pet – even in your own yard.
- Check your vehicles for leaks and repair them.
- Reduce the amount of hazardous wastes used at home, such as excess paint, bleach, and fertilizer.
- Compost yard clippings and leaves. Don't blow them into the street.
- Wash your vehicle on your lawn rather than on pavement.
- Dispose of toxic and hazardous materials properly, such as recycling centers and community collection days.
- **DO NOT** dispose of hazardous materials or wastes such as solvents, degreasers, waste oil, commercial cleaners, pesticides, paint thinner, or radiator fluid by pouring them down a floor drain, sink, toilet, or storm drain.
- **DO NOT** use pesticides or herbicides near wells and minimize the use of fertilizers near wells.

If You Have A Septic Tank:

- Pump out your septic tank every two or three years and keep accurate records of your system's maintenance.
- Be alert to signs of a failing system such as the presence of wet areas above the leaching field and backing up of wastewater following periods of heavy rain.
- **DO NOT** use commercial septic tank cleaners or chlorine bleach.
- **DO NOT** pour hazardous materials such as paint, paint thinner, solvents, industrial cleaners, disinfectants, pesticides, or waste oil down toilets or sinks.
- **DO NOT** pour grease or cooking oil down the drain.
- **DO NOT** overload your system with food waste from the garbage disposal.
- **DO NOT** dispose of nonbiodegradable objects such as disposable diapers down the toilet. They do not decompose.

The land and the water are interconnected. Simple things you do today can prevent possible contamination.



About the SWAP Program

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) oversees the state's Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) 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 SWAP program, SWAP 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 SWAP program since 1991. To learn more about the program, including success stories from other utilities, visit www.SWAPTexas.org.

For questions about the program, call the TCEQ Public Drinking Water Division at 512-239-4691 or e-mail pdws@tceq.state.tx.us. Call the SWAP Hotline at 713-423-7367.