

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101

Ground Water Protection Underground Injection Control

Revised EPA Regulations Became Effective April 5, 2000

The federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) contains several ground water protection provisions. These include the Underground Injection Control (UIC) and Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) programs. The UIC regulations have been recently revised. Some of the new requirements underscore the importance of EPA's UIC program and the Department of Environmental Conservation's (ADEC) Drinking Water and Domestic Wastewater Programs working more closely together to protect ground water quality in Alaska. In short, the new regulations:

- Clarify joint DEC and EPA responsibility for regulating certain septic systems in Alaska.
- Partly backstop DEC's longstanding ban on the installation of cesspools.
- Ban the installation of septic systems or dry wells designed to receive waste fluids from motor vehicle servicing areas (such as waste fluids from shop sinks or floor drains).
- Explicitly require closure of existing septic systems or dry wells which receive waste fluids from motor vehicle servicing areas (such as shop sinks or floor drains). EPA has the option to implement this provision in Alaska in specific places or statewide.

EPA is holding a series of meetings in early October to further describe the UIC and SWAP programs, and the steps that EPA and DEC are taking together to protect ground water quality from potential sources of contamination. EPA will be describing the new regulations, explaining how implementation will occur, and seeking public comment about that plan. For more information about the UIC program in general and the revised regulations, check out the following website: www.epa.gov/safewater/uic.html or call Jonathan Williams, EPA, at (206) 553-1369.

Meeting Location and Dates

Kenai

Tuesday, October 10, 2000 at 3 pm
Cook Inlet Aquaculture
40610 Kalifornsky Beach Road

Anchorage

Wednesday, October 11, 2000 at 2 pm
Loussac Library Public Conference Room
3600 Denali Street

Wasilla

Wednesday, October 11, 2000 at 7 pm
Mat-Su Borough Dept. of Public Safety
680 North Seward Meridian Parkway

Fairbanks

Thursday, October 12, 2000 at 3 pm
Noel Wien Public Library Conference Room
1215 Cowles Street



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Source Water Assessment and Protection Program

(otherwise known in Alaska as the
Drinking Water Protection Program)

A public water system is one defined as "serving 25 or more people, or having 15 or more connections." The 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) require States to assess the quality of the water sources supplying public water systems, and report the results of the assessments to the public by the Spring of 2003. DEC has developed a program that will assess the quality of both groundwater and surface water sources used for public water systems, and will assist interested communities in using the assessment results to develop a local protection plan for longer term protection of their drinking water supply.

The steps involved in a drinking water source assessment are the following:

- delineate the area around the well or surface water intake (i.e. outline where the water is coming from);
- inventory that area for all current and potential future sources of contamination;
- determine the vulnerability of that public water system to actual contamination; and
- report that determination to the local government and others.

The October public meetings in Kenai, Anchorage, Wasilla, and Fairbanks will include an update on the Alaska Drinking Water Protection Program.

The UIC program and the Alaska Drinking Water Protection Program are two ways that EPA and DEC are working together to protect ground water quality in Alaska. For more information on the Alaska Drinking Water Protection Program, visit www.state.ak.us/dec/deh/water/source.htm, or call James Weise, DEC at (907) 269-7647. You can also call Jill Nogi, EPA, at (206) 553-1900.

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