

CLEAN BUSINESS IN A WATERSHED

VOLUME 4 SUMMER 2005



Portions of Foster, Glocester, Johnston and Scituate are a land area called the Scituate Reservoir Watershed. The Scituate Reservoir, lying in the lowest part of this land area, catches all water flowing from this watershed.

The Scituate Reservoir is a major source of drinking water in Rhode Island.

THE SCITUATE RESERVOIR WATERSHED EDUCATION PROGRAM
PASSING ON CLEAN WATER

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

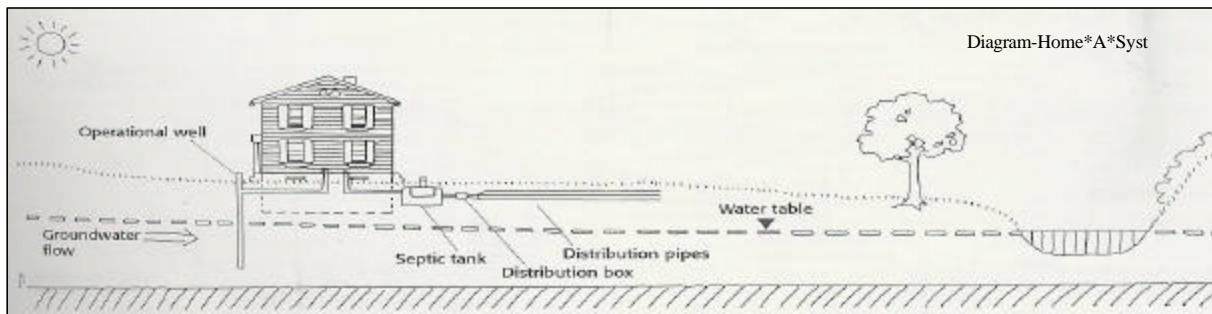
Part Two—PREVENTING WELL WATER CONTAMINATION

Did you know... that a **failed septic system** can contaminate nearby drinking wells with human wastes and cause diseases such as hepatitis and gastroenteritis?

That pouring paints, solvents, dyes and other hazardous substances down the drain can **contaminate nearby drinking wells?**

That, by law, property owners are **responsible for damages** caused by their septic systems?

This issue of *Clean Business in a Watershed* will explain how pollutants pass from a **Septic System** into **groundwater** and into **drinking wells**. You will also learn how to prevent this from happening at your business building.



HOW DOES SEPTIC SYSTEM WASTE ENTER A DRINKING WELL?

Notice, in the diagram, how the operational well pipe goes down into the groundwater flow and serves to bring water upward into the building. (Note: The level of groundwater will rise and fall with rain and drought and groundwater withdrawal from nearby wells.)

Locate the Septic Tank. Wastewater from toilets, sinks, etc., leave the building through the pipe into the Septic tank. Solid wastes will settle here while fluids will flow into distribution pipes. (drainfield/soil absorption area)

Cracks in the Septic Tank, clogs in the Septic System and excess wastewater flows can all cause wastewater to leak out of the Septic System and enter nearby ground water. This contaminated ground water could then be pumped upward into drinking wells.



HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS
POURED DOWN THE DRAIN
(OR ON THE GROUND)
CAN CONTAMINATE
NEARBY GROUNDWATER

**WHICH SUBSTANCES ARE
CONSIDERED HAZARDOUS?**

Any substance that could potentially harm human health is considered hazardous.

Some examples are: paints, dyes, printing inks, photo processing materials, flammable materials, any substance that burns or itches on skin contact, or bubbles/fumes on contact with water.

Did you know?...You are responsible for waste identification and disposal.

For information about waste identification and disposal, contact:

RI DEM, Office of Waste Management

Office of Technical and Customer Assistance 401-222-6822.

Website: www.state.ri.us/dem/ click on Programs-Waste Management-Other Waste Topics-Wastes-Hazardous Waste

Did you know?...New floor drains are prohibited and existing floor drains are being phased out?

For information about floor drains contact Craig Roy at RIDEM 401-222-6800 or go to www.state.ri.us/dem/ click on Programs/Water Resources/Permitting /Underground Injection Control.

**BUSINESS PROCEDURES TO
PREVENT GROUNDWATER
CONTAMINATION**



IDENTIFY POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AT YOUR WORKPLACE

LEARN METHODS FOR SAFE DISPOSAL

TEACH EMPLOYEES SAFE DISPOSAL METHODS

POST INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROPER DISPOSAL IN A VISIBLE PLACE AS A DAILY GUIDELINE

KEEP HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES OUT OF GROUNDWATER

USE WATER BASED PRODUCTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE

PREVENT LEFTOVER CHEMICALS BY BUYING ONLY THE AMOUNT NEEDED

USE CHEMICALS AS DIRECTED

BUY LESS TOXIC ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS

More Information:

RI Home*A*Syst

401-874-5398

WWW.EDC.URI.EDU/

Land and Water Resource Management

**A FAILED SEPTIC SYSTEMS CAN
CONTAMINATE YOUR DRINKING WELL
WITH BACTERIA.**

Bacterial contamination cannot be detected by sight, smell or taste.

A test for **coliform bacteria** is needed.

For information on well water testing, contact:

RI Department of Health

Office of Drinking Water Quality

401-222-6867

<http://www.health.ri.gov/labs/waterlabs.php>

OTHER HELPFUL CONTACTS:

**Northern Rhode Island
Conservation District**

17 Smith Avenue
Greenville, RI 02828
(phone) 401-949-1480
(Fax) 401-949-4436

www.landwaterconnection.org

Providence Water

552 Academy Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
(phone) 401-521-6300
www.provwater.com

URI Website:

www.uri.edu/ce/wq

**LEARN ABOUT
SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**

IN NEXT *CLEAN BUSINESS BULLETIN*