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What You Can Do to Protect Drinking Water

Yard Maintenance

DO

- Apply chemicals only as directed. More is not always better!
- Cultivate plants which discourage pests. This reduces pesticide usage.
- Leave lawn clippings on lawn or compost them.
- Pull weeds by hand.
- Clean up after pets.

DON'T

- ☒ Over apply fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides.
- ☒ Use gas powered leaf blowers or weed whackers.

Automotive

DO

- Recycle used oil & antifreeze at service stations.
- Have automotive fluid leaks fixed.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Drive only when necessary.

DON'T

- ☒ Pour used oil, antifreeze, or other chemicals on the ground or down a storm drain.

Storm Drains

DO

- Take unwanted chemicals to hazardous waste collection sites.

DON'T

- ☒ Pour chemicals into storm drains or drainage ditches.

Plumbing/Septic Systems

DO

- Have your septic tank inspected annually.
- Have your septic tank pumped at LEAST every five years.
- Use phosphate free detergents.
- Take unwanted chemicals to hazardous waste collection sites.

DON'T

- ☒ Pour chemicals down the drain
- ☒ Use toilets as trash cans.
- ☒ Use septic system additives or "cleaners".

Additional Water Protection Ideas

DO

- If you have a fuel tank, make sure it is not leaking. You can also install a concrete bermed pad under the tank to catch any accidental spills or leaks.
- Hire someone to seal properly all unused water wells on your property.

Some Tips for Conserving Drinking Water

The average consumer uses 60 gallons of water daily inside the home. There are four basic ways to save water - economize, repair leaks, install water-saving devices, and reuse water.

Outdoors

- Plant low water use grasses and shrubs to cut your lawn watering by 20-50 percent.
- Add three-inch layer of mulch around outdoor plants to hold in water and reduce evaporation.
- Set your lawn mower to a height of three inches. This keeps the grass roots shaded and lawn holding moisture so you have to mow and water your lawn less frequently.
- Water lawns and gardens early in the morning so the water doesn't evaporate as quickly. Water your lawn slowly with a steady trickle, but not a mist, which easily evaporates.
- For established lawns water once per week with no more than one inch of water applied.
- Use plants that are drought resistant.
- When washing your car, use a bucket for soapy water and use a hose only for rinsing.
- Use a rake or broom to clean up sidewalks, driveways, and gutters - not the hose.

Bathroom

- Don't leave water running while brushing your teeth or shaving.
- Repair leaks in faucets, toilets, etc.
- Install faucet aerators. These can cut indoor water consumption by as much as six percent.
- Insulate hot water pipes.
- Install a low consumption toilet (1.5 gallons/flush) or replace some of the water in a tank with a plastic milk carton filled with water.

Showers

- Take shorter showers and turn off the water while soaping. It is not necessary to shower longer than five minutes. Remodel with low consumption (2.5 gallons per minute) showerhead.

Kitchen

- Use a vegetable brush for cleaning fruits and vegetables. Use a hand spray sparingly or fill the sink with water.
- Install faucet aerators (2 gallons per minute)
- Repair leaks.
- Store a jug of ice water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap until cold.
- Make sure dishwasher is fully loaded.
- Scrape dishes off and let pots and pans soak overnight instead of rinsing them off.

Washing Machines

- Wash with full loads.

OEPA Fact Sheet

Ozone

As you may be aware the water you consume is collected from wells and then pumped to our Water Treatment Facility. At which point it undergoes a treatment process involving several phases. Beginning in the month of May, we will be making a change to the first phase of the process by implementing the use of Ozone as a pre-treatment. During the transition period we do not anticipate any interruptions to your water quality, but if you experience any discolored water please feel free to contact our office.

Earthy Taste & Odor

Earthy/musty taste and odors that can occur in drinking water can be related to several factors. There are two common causes of a musty, moldy, or earthy taste or odor in the water: bacteria growing in your drain, or certain types of organisms growing in the water supply.

Over time organic matter (such as soap, food waste, and hair) can accumulate on the walls of the drain. Bacteria can grow and multiply on these organic deposits producing gases that can smell musty or moldy. These gases can accumulate in the drain until the water is turned on. As the water runs down the drain, gases are expelled into the air around the sink. It is natural to assume the bad odor is coming from the water because the smell is noticeable only when the water is on. The drain may need to be disinfected. This is the most common cause of this problem.

The other cause is much less common, especially in ground water systems like Tate Monroe Water Assn., Inc. This results from certain types of algae, fungi, and bacteria growing in the water supply as in a surface water facility's water supply reservoir. As these organisms grow and multiply, they excrete small amounts of harmless chemicals into the water that cause a musty, moldy, or earthy taste and odor. The two most common chemicals are geosmin and methylisoborneol (MIB). Although these chemicals are harmless, the human senses of taste and smell are extremely sensitive to them and can detect them in the water at concentrations as low as 5 parts per trillion.

Similar "stale" taste and odors may also occur in distribution lines related to low flow situations. Tate Monroe Water has an ongoing flushing program that flushes out these low flow areas which are usually at dead end mains. Also, anytime plumbing has not been used for a long time, the water can develop an unpleasant taste, so faucets should be run for a short time to bring in fresh water. There are no adverse health effects associated with earthy/musty taste and odor substances.