

Drinking Water Toxics Program



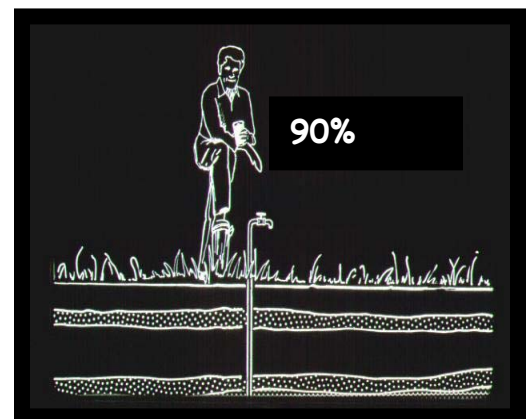
GOAL



TO DETECT AND PREVENT THE EXPOSURE OF PEOPLE TO TOXIC CHEMICALS THROUGH THE SAMPLING AND TESTING OF PRIVATE DRINKING WATER WELLS

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Groundwater is used for approximately 90% of Florida's drinking water supplies. Over two million of our citizens get their drinking water from private wells. Everyone wants to know that their water supply is safe.



Yet, private wells are generally not sampled on a routine basis. Many times homeowners may not know there is anything wrong with the quality of their drinking water unless a problem comes up. The Florida Department of Health, through a contract

from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the County Health Departments and Drinking Water Toxics Program, tests and assesses private drinking water wells that may be affected by the following sources:

- Waste from industry,
- Chemicals used by farms,
- Leaking landfills, or
- Other toxic chemicals that enter the groundwater supply.



Wells are selected for sampling due to a number of reasons. A County Health Department may be concerned about a known source of contamination near homes with private wells, and starts a well sampling program for the area. Sometimes, the Department of Health in coordination with other state agencies performs routine testing to determine background water quality in a region. The DEP district offices also may request sampling of private wells to investigate possible contamination of groundwater. Other times, medical conditions that may be caused by toxic pollutants in the environment result in a doctor's request for the testing of the water supply.

In these cases, a specialist from the County Health Department will ask for permission to sample the well. A convenient time to visit the home will be arranged. A water sample is taken and the exact location of the well is recorded with a special device called a Global Positioning System (GPS).



The water sample is sent to the Department of Health Laboratory. The lab tests the sample for a number of potential contaminants. The resident or homeowner will be told the results of the tests by mail. There is no cost for the well sampling or the water tests. DEP pays for all laboratory costs. If the well is found to be unsafe for use, DEP has a program to fix the water supply. This is done at no cost to the homeowner.



If you have questions about the quality of well water in your area or would like additional information on environmental quality in Florida, please call your county health department. Or you may visit the DOH website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us> under the subject choice: Drinking Water. You may also contact the Bureau of Water Programs at (850) 245-4240.