

# SAFE DRINKING WATER:

## What consumers need to know & steps you can take

### Where does drinking water come from?

- Drinking water comes from surface water (rivers, lakes, reservoirs) or ground water (water found underground), or a combination.
- Drinking water is delivered by different sources: a public or community water system, a private well, or through a company if the consumer purchases bottled water.
- Public and community water systems are systems that serve piped water to at least 25 persons or 5 service connections.

### How do I know my drinking water is safe?

- If drinking water comes from a public water system, the consumer can find out about the quality of the water through the Annual Water Quality Report. These reports are to be mailed to the public water system consumers annually.
- If drinking water comes from a private well, it is the individual homeowner's responsibility to assess the quality of the water supply. There are several easy measures to take: find out where the well is located, monitor the water for changes (odor, color, taste), and test the water annually.
- If purchasing bottled water, it is tested as part of the New York State Bottled Water Certification Program.

### What can I do if there is a problem with my drinking water?

- Public water supply: Contact the public water system provider listed on the water bill.
- If an individual's well water is contaminated, it may need to be treated or disinfected. Water treatment devices are available and could be installed to treat and/or remove impurities. Contact DC Department of Health at (845) 486-3411 for information about testing well water or the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791) for disinfection and treatment options.



# SAFE DRINKING WATER (Continued)

## How can I protect my drinking water?

**Be Informed!** Drinking water protection is everyone's responsibility. Think about the water you drink. Is it a public water supply? Or a private well? Consumers of a public water supply should read the Annual Water Quality Report provided by the water supplier. Private well owners should maintain their well properly and test their water regularly.

**Don't contaminate!** Keep marinas, lakes and rivers clean. **Reduce** the amount of chemicals and pesticides used in and around the home, and **replace** with safer alternatives. Contact the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency at (845) 463-6020 for more information on disposal and recycling of household chemicals.

**Recycle used motor oil!** Take used motor oil to a service station or recycling center.

## What to do in case of an emergency?

- In the event of an emergency, individuals may need to rely on alternative drinking water sources. It is important to always have several bottles of water on hand to be prepared to deal with water supply disruption and contamination.
- **After a flood:** If a well has been submerged, it should be tested for coliform bacteria.
- **After a spill:** Contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation at 800-457-7362. They may conduct an investigation and/or test wells in the area of the spill.

## Where can I get more information?

Safe Drinking Water Hotline: 800-426-4791

Or you may visit the following websites  
(use "drinking water" as a keyword search):

[www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us)  
[www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.dutchessny.gov](http://www.dutchessny.gov)

