

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Groundwater Protection

Approximately 75% of New Hampshire residents rely primarily on groundwater for their drinking water. Recognizing the importance of protecting the natural quality of groundwater, the legislature passed the Groundwater Protection Act (RSA 485-C) in 1991. This legislation recognized that a wide variety of activities involve the use of materials that can, if not properly handled, contaminate groundwater. There have been numerous instances of groundwater contamination in New Hampshire from leaking storage facilities, improper waste disposal, accidental spills and even from normal use of these materials. Potentially contaminating substances can be more safely managed if certain basic guidelines are followed. The Groundwater Protection Act directed the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to adopt rules specifying best management practices (BMPs) for the Potential Contamination Sources (PCSs) listed below.

NHDES developed and adopted New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules Part Env-Wq 401 Best Management Practices for Groundwater Protection, which apply to all potential contamination sources in the state. The BMPs within the rules are essentially common-sense operating practices that are simple and economical to implement. The purpose of the BMPs is to help prevent a release of regulated substances, as defined under this rule. Regulated substances include oil, as defined under RSA 146-A, III, regulated contaminants established pursuant to RSA 485-C:6, and hazardous substances listed under the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), within 40 CFR § 302. Cleaning up the release of a regulated substance can be very expensive. Following the BMP rules reduces environmental liability and minimizes potential cleanup costs.

Potential Contamination Sources (PCSs) ¹	
• Vehicle service and repair shops • General service and repair shops • Metalworking shops • Manufacturing facilities • Underground and above-ground storage tanks • Waste and scrap processing and storage • Transportation corridors • Septic systems (at commercial and industrial facilities) • Laboratories and certain professional offices (medical, dental, veterinary)	• Use of agricultural chemicals² • Salt storage and use • Snow dumps • Stormwater infiltration ponds or leaching catch basins • Cleaning services • Food processing plants • Fueling and maintenance of earth moving equipment • Concrete, asphalt, and tar manufacture • Cemeteries • Hazardous waste facilities
¹ As identified in New Hampshire's Groundwater Protection Act (RSA 485-C)	
² Subject to BMPs developed and administered by N.H. Dept. of Food, Agriculture, and Markets	

Summary of BMP for Groundwater Protection Rules

Storage

- Store regulated substances on an impervious surface.
- Secure storage areas against unauthorized entry.
- Label regulated containers clearly and visibly.
- Inspect storage areas weekly.
- Durable cover over *regulated containers*¹ in outside storage areas.
- Keep regulated containers that are stored outside more than 50 feet from surface water and storm drains, 75 feet from private wells, and up to 400 feet from public wells.
- Secondary containment is required for regulated containers stored outside, except for on-premise use heating fuel tanks, or aboveground or underground storage tanks otherwise regulated.

¹Regulated container means any device in which a regulated substance is stored, transported, treated, disposed of, or otherwise handled, with a capacity of five gallons or more. The term does not include fuel tanks attached to and supplying fuel to a motor vehicle.

Handling

- Keep regulated containers closed and sealed.
- Place drip pans under spigots, valves, and pumps.
- Have spill control and containment equipment readily available in all work areas.
- Use funnels and drip pans when transferring regulated substances; perform transfers over impervious surface.

Release Response Information

- Post information on what to do in the event of a spill.

Floor Drains and Work Sinks

- Cannot discharge into or onto the ground.

For More Information

Please contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at (603) 271-2513 or dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov or visit our website at www.des.nh.gov.

Note: This fact sheet is accurate as of September 2019. Statutory or regulatory changes or the availability of additional information after this date may render this information inaccurate or incomplete.