



Sampling Your Drinking Water for Petroleum-Related Compounds

What You Need to Know

The Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Oil Control Program (OCP) recommends that all owners of private drinking water supply wells sample their well periodically for chemical constituents known as volatile organic compounds, or VOCs. These VOCs can be the result of petroleum or other chemical storage and use on the property or in the area. Following are the OCP's recommendations and resources.

Dos and Don'ts

- Do sample your well water at least once, particularly if there was history of petroleum storage and use on the property or on an adjacent property (e.g., heating oil use).
- Do conduct additional water sampling if there is a change in the taste, odor, or appearance of your well water, particularly if it involves a petroleum like odor or a "sweet" odor.
- Do have the laboratory sample for VOCs using EPA Method 524.2.
- Do also have the laboratory sample for total petroleum hydrocarbons – diesel range organics (TPH-DRO) using EPA Method 8015 if heating oil is, or has been, used at the property.
- Do ensure that the water sample results meet applicable regulatory standards for potable use.
- Do contact the Oil Control Program at 410-537-3442 if your sample results indicate any detections.

Additional Resources

The following is a list of additional resources for facts and information about sampling your drinking water supply well:

- MDE-OCP List of Laboratories:
https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/OilControl/Documents/OCP_List_of_Laboratories_FL_NAL_7-24-24_2pgs.pdf
- MDE Residential Wells Website:
https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/water_supply/Pages/Residential_Wells.aspx
- MDE Individual Well Recommendations:
https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/water_supply/Pages/well_recommendations.aspx



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

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- University of Maryland Extension Protect Your Water Supply:
<https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environment-natural-resources/program-areas/wells-septic-systems-and-water-quality>
- Environmental Protection Agency Private Drinking Water Wells:
<https://www.epa.gov/privatewells>
- Your county Health Department may also be able to provide information on sampling your supply well for petroleum-related compounds.

Questions

If you have additional questions or to report a detection of petroleum compounds in your drinking water, please contact the Oil Control Program at 410-537-3442.