

1999 Nevada Class V Injection Well Inventory

The Nevada Class V injection well program is designed to protect underground sources of drinking water (ground water) from contamination. As the most arid state, Nevada has very limited water resources.

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection's (NDEP) Underground Injection Control (UIC) program has been charged with development of an inventory of high risk Class V wells as part of a nation-wide inventory. A single well releasing chemicals into the ground water may pollute a community's source of drinking water. A shallow injection well is typically a "low tech" shallow waste disposal system that is used to release fluids above or into the groundwater. An injection well can be a floor drain that terminates at a leachfield, a dry well, or a sump.

Through assistance of a contractor, NDEP will conduct a systematic county by county inventory. The inventory process will be initiated via individual mailings to selected businesses, which will include an inventory questionnaire and Class V Well Fact Sheet.

A response is requested within sixty days, and those facilities not reporting will remain in the program, subject to permitting, inspections and monitoring. NDEP will work with local agencies, and the public, to increase awareness of the potential dangers of Class V injection wells. The inventory process will be concluded with facilities identified as having injection wells, are either permitted, connected to sewer, or modified to closed systems (recycling/waste minimization).

Injection wells not permitted will be plugged and abandoned. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water, through its rule-making process, has identified categories of high risk injection wells. Three categories of high risk injection wells have been identified:

- ▶ Motor vehicle waste disposal wells;
- ▶ Industrial waste disposal well; and
- ▶ Cesspools.

New EPA [rules affecting Motor Vehicle Waste Disposal wells](#) and cesspools have just been promulgated by the USEPA. (i.e., (MVWDWs -- wells that receive or have received fluids from vehicular repair or maintenance activities, such as auto body repair shop, automotive repair shops and new and used car dealerships and specialty repair shops). Effective early in 2000, construction of new MVWDWs and cesspools will be prohibited nationwide ([See EPA Fact sheet on new rule](#)). Furthermore, the EPA's new regulations will require that existing wells in groundwater protection areas and other sensitive groundwater areas (part of the State's Source Water Assessment Program) be either closed or meet drinking water standards at point of injection.

Nevada is in the process of determining what, if any, changes will be required to the State's existing UIC regulations to reflect the federal changes. Cesspools have been prohibited in Nevada since the inception of the UIC Program, and under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS 445A.465) no injection well is

authorized without permit. In addition to the MVWDWs, Industrial waste disposal wells are considered potentially threatening to groundwater quality and include industries and many small retail service facilities that may use or release toxic or hazardous chemicals. Facility types include laundromats and dry cleaners, smelters, car washes, laboratories, petroleum storage facilities, electric power plants, electro-platers, and printing shops.

Main threats to groundwater/drinking water occur by release of organic chemicals, often degreasing solvents, and metals, from various process and wash-water waste streams, that are toxic and/or carcinogenic, even in small amounts. It is NDEP's policy to work with businesses to achieve compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations. Typically, owners/operators may achieve compliance with existing regulations by:

- ▶ Showing that their waste streams do not degrade State Waters, and obtaining a permit from NDEP;
- ▶ Providing treatment/recycling systems before injection, and obtaining a permit; or,
- ▶ Connecting to the publicly-owned wastewater treatment facility, thereby eliminating the injection of fluids. The well(s) must then be properly abandoned.

Keep in mind that any sewered facility may need a wastewater discharge (pretreatment) permit from the County or local municipality. Therefore, the preferred trend is toward closed systems, with recycling, and a prescribed regime of best management practices/waste minimization for Pollution Prevention.

Aside from assistance through the UIC program staff and their contractors, businesses may obtain information and compliance/technical assistance through NDEP's Small Business Assistance Program, and the Nevada Small Business Development Center. The inventory is being partially funded by U.S. EPA Region IX through grants authorized by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)-- with matching funds from the State of Nevada. These funds, called the SDWA State Revolving Fund (SRF) are administered by the Nevada Division of Health, Bureau of Health Protection Services through their Source Water Protection Program -- which includes both surface and ground water resources.