

Federal Laws Protecting Groundwater and Surface Water

Several key laws protect the quality of groundwater and surface water. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for seeing that these laws are followed. The EPA assigns different responsibilities to other state agencies and distributes federal funds to carry them out. The main laws listed here are the responsibility of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Safe Drinking Water Act (1974)

- Sets primary and secondary drinking water standards
- Regulates well-injection of liquids and liquid wastes into the ground
- Establishes monitoring and reporting requirements for drinking water
- Establishes a wellhead protection program

The Clean Water Act (1972)

- Sets water quality standards for all bodies of surface water
- Limits the amount of industrial wastes that can be discharged into rivers, lakes and streams

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act — RCRA (1980)

- Regulates the generation, storage, transport, treatment and storage of hazardous wastes
- Gives the EPA power to protect all groundwater sources from hazardous waste

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act — CERCL (1980)

Better known as the “SuperFund,” this act cleans up existing hazardous waste sites that pose a threat to surface water, groundwater or other sources.

Toxic Substances Control Act — TSCA (1976)

TSCA indirectly protects groundwater by regulating handling and disposal practices.

Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act — FIFRA (1972)

- Establishes procedures for classifying, registering, monitoring and disposing of pesticides
- Ensures that commercial and private applicators of pesticides are trained and licensed

This publication — previously named WQ22 *Federal Laws Protecting Groundwater and Surface Water* — was written by Karen DeFelice, former associate extension agronomist; Nyle Wollenhaupt, former state extension agronomist; and Daryl Buchholz, former state extension agronomist. This material is based upon work supported by the United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, under special project number 89-EWQI-1-9203.

ALSO FROM MU EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS

- EQ21 *Agricultural Sources of Contaminants in Groundwater and Surface Water*
- EQ23 *Groundwater Quality*
- EQ421 *State and EPA Regulations for Domestic Wastewater Sludge and Biosolids*
- G855 *Pesticide Laws and Regulations*
- G1913 *Understanding the Material Safety Data Sheet*
- G7512 *Pesticides: Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know*

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