

V. WATER SUPPLY EMERGENCY CONTINGENCY PLAN

The goal of this element of the Plan is to provide both short-term and long-term protection of the City's water supply system by identification of personnel, testing equipment, procedures, and materials which can be used for rapid correction or elimination of environmental accidents which might constitute a water supply emergency. The contingency plan also addresses response protocols, notification procedures and methods of containment.

The existing contingency plan outlines the program for the rapid correction or mitigation of water supply emergencies. It contains an inventory of necessary stand-by personnel, equipment, chemicals, and other materials readily available for the correction of water supply problems, including emergency measures in the event of contamination of the municipal wells from an emergency spill within the wellhead protection areas. The means of notification of customers affected by an emergency is also provided, along with a description of the precautions and measures to be taken to protect the health of the affected system's water customers.

City leaders understand that response to contaminated wells is not entirely a technical problem. Indeed, when a municipal well becomes contaminated, it becomes a technical problem requiring professional knowledge of hydrogeology, engineering and other disciplines. However, financial, legal, public relations and risk assessment problems may also occur. Often, the initial public questions include:

- What is the current water quality?
- What is the source of the contaminants?
- What are the effects of past water usage?
- What action is being taken?

When municipal wells become contaminated, it is usually a surprise. This is especially true for wells located in a Wellhead Protection community. While it is unlikely that any plan will prevent an adverse response from the City's water customers, this Wellhead Protection Plan suggests:

- Inform residents of the truth as soon as it is known
- Inform residents immediately upon confirmation of contaminants in the water supply
- Continue to inform residents of activities being undertaken

If the wells become contaminated, a previously established, consistent and strong public education program would be invaluable. Such a program would likely provide City officials with the "benefit of the doubt" when explaining cleanup concentration goals, how clean is clean, projected schedules, costs and funding.

Future updates to the Contaminant Source Inventory may identify chemicals in groundwater near the City's wells. The City may then consider if water testing should be performed more frequently than required by law. The City will work closely with environmental professionals (State, County and private) to evaluate cost/benefit relationships of any testing beyond what is already completed.