

Private Well Sampling

Frequently asked questions

Why are you being asked to have your well tested?

The MPCA routinely requests landfills conduct drinking water quality assessments in the area of the landfill if contaminated groundwater was or may be identified in groundwater at the landfill. Sampling your drinking water will determine if chemicals are present or could potentially create a health concern.

The amounts of chemicals in groundwater at the landfill are measured at very low concentrations. These contaminants are potentially a concern if found beyond the landfill in drinking water. There may be health concerns when 1) exposures occur for a long period of time, 2) the amount of chemicals is high, and/or 3) a sensitive individual is present.

What does the sampling involve?

The sampling and laboratory analysis will be done at no cost to you. This sampling will help us take steps to ensure that you and your family are drinking water that meets state standards and protects public health. It will also guide potential future testing.

Collecting the sample takes about one-half hour. The sample must be collected from a tap that is not filtered (and preferably not softened). If your outside taps are turned on, you do not need to be present while the sample is collected. If your outside taps are filtered by a type of filter that could affect our results or if they are turned off, we will need to collect the sample inside your home. The landfill's contractor or staff will contact you before they plan to collect your sample and arrange a convenient time for sample collection if you need to be present.

An accredited laboratory will analyze the sample. You will receive a letter with results and an explanation of what they mean. It will typically take about 5-7 weeks for your letter to be sent.

What if a risk is identified?

The results will be compared to Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) screening values. If the results show amounts of chemicals in drinking water are greater than the health-based standard, an alternative source of drinking water will be arranged.

What do I need to do?

- Please follow the instructions in any communications you have received from the landfill or their contractor. Even if you do not wish to have your water tested, we would appreciate a reply indicating this, so they do not continue to try to contact you.
- You will typically not need to be present at the time of the sampling. The landfill's contractor will work with you to perform the sampling in an acceptable location.

For more information:

- For sampling questions, contact the landfill or their contractor identified in the communications you have received.
- For questions about the purpose of the sampling, contacts for MPCA's Solid Waste Permitting can be found at the bottom of this webpage - <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/business-with-us/waste-and-recycling>.
- For health-related questions, contact the Minnesota Department of Health. The MDH Health Risk Assessment Unit can be reached at health.hazard@state.mn.us or call 651-201-4899.