

## Prevention Strategies –

It is the responsibility of every citizen to protect our drinking water supplies.

- ◆ At a minimum, it is recommended that water wells are tested for the following:
  - coliform bacteria, yearly
  - nitrates, every 3 years
  - arsenic, at least once

*A list of accredited laboratories may be obtained from Clark County Public Health.*

- ◆ Dispose of hazardous materials such as oil, gasoline, and pesticides at a licensed facility to help protect all rivers, streams, lakes, etc. In Clark County, Columbia Resource Company accepts hazardous household materials free of charge.
- ◆ Slope the ground surface so that runoff drains away from the well in all directions.
- ◆ Regularly check the visible parts of the well for cracking or missing well cap.
- ◆ Do not store, mix or use pesticides, fertilizers, fuels or other pollutants near the well.
- ◆ By law, abandoned wells must be decommissioned by a licensed well driller.



For an alternative format, contact the Clark County ADA Compliance Office. Voice (360)397-2025; TTY (360)397-2445; E-mail ADA@clark.wa.gov

## For Further Information Please Contact:

- ◆ EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline  
1-800-426-4791

**Environmental Public Health  
Office Service Hours**

Monday , Tuesday, Thursday & Friday  
8 – 11:45 AM 1 – 4:30 PM

Wednesday  
9 – 11:45 AM 1 – 4 :30 PM

Phone number: 360-397-8428

Visit our Drinking Water Program Website  
at: <http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/water/index.html>



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# Drinking Water In Clark County



**CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH**

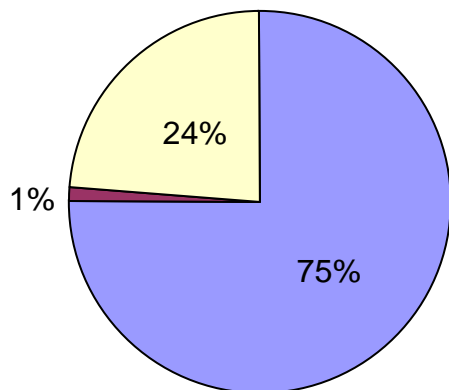
Drinking water is vital for our survival. For this reason we focus our efforts on protecting public drinking water sources and private wells. Our efforts are designed to prevent potential health problems and injury from drinking water sources.

## Water Systems –

Residents of Clark County obtain drinking water through public or private water systems.

- ◆ Private water systems (i.e., individual wells) supply drinking water to 24% of Clark County residents which is about 31,000 systems servicing 93,000 people.
- ◆ The majority of residents (75%) are served by large public Group A water systems which include the large municipal systems.
- ◆ Ground water is the main source of drinking water in Clark County.

Population Served by Type of Water System  
Clark County, 2004



- Group A—public (15+connections)
- Group B—public (2-14 connections)
- Private water system (individual well)

## Drinking Water Quality –

Drinking water may contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of certain contaminants such as iron and manganese usually do not present health risks for most people. However, even small amounts of contaminants such as *Cryptosporidium* may be dangerous for vulnerable groups, including persons with cancer, persons infected with HIV, the elderly, pregnant women and infants.

Contaminants may include:

- ◆ Infectious agents from wildlife or humans such as *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *E.coli* bacteria.
- ◆ Inorganic substances such as **arsenic**, **chromium**, and **nitrates** which may occur naturally or result from industrial, agricultural, or residential practices.
- ◆ Organic chemicals such as **tetrachloroethylene (TCE)** from industry, **benzene** from gas stations, and **pesticides** from farming or home use.
- ◆ Radioactive elements such as **radon** which may occur naturally.

An important way of determining contamination by infectious agents is the coliform bacteria test that is regularly conducted for public water systems and highly recommended for individual wells.

- ◆ For public water systems<sup>1</sup>, thousands of coliform tests were performed in 1998 and less than 1% showed coliform contamination.



- ◆ During 1996 and 1997, 2,300 individual wells were voluntarily tested<sup>2</sup> for Coliforms, of which 30% were found unsatisfactory.
- ◆ During disasters, such as flooding, Clark County Public Health may issue special instructions to keep drinking water safe (e.g. boil water alerts).

<sup>1</sup>Group A public water systems

<sup>2</sup>Tested at Clark County Public Health

## Abandoned Wells –

Old, unused, or obsolete wells are a potential threat to human health and safety and must be decommissioned properly.

- ◆ An improperly closed private well can potentially contaminate the area's groundwater by allowing the introduction of unwanted materials directly into the water source. It is unknown how many abandoned wells there are in Clark County.
- ◆ Hand dug wells pose a safety hazard because of their large diameter (usually 3 feet).