



Fact Sheet

Why test your water?

In rural Saskatchewan, people rely on private ground water sources for their daily water needs. These supplies may be of poor quality and often require some form of treatment to make them safe and aesthetically acceptable.

In determining the quality of water, many people rely on the obvious – how it looks, tastes and smells. Although these are important characteristics when assessing water quality, other properties that can't be detected by our senses, should also be considered.

As water quality varies with each source, the safety of a water supply cannot be determined, nor its quality effectively improved and maintained, without first knowing what constituents are in the raw ground water supply.

The first step toward improving and maintaining good quality water is making sure all drinking water supplies are routinely analysed. Sample collection is a critical step in receiving an accurate water analysis – analytical results are only as good as the samples collected.

When having water tested, it is important to consider:

- what constituents to sample for
- where the samples are collected
- how samples are collected

All these factors can affect the accuracy of analytical results and if they are representative of the water source. Once the analysis has been completed, the results and their implications need to be interpreted. Only then, based on the constituents of the water and individual water needs, can the appropriate water treatment be selected to ensure that the best quality water is being used.

Why should I use the Rural Water Quality Advisory program?

The program offers quality advice. With the growing demand from rural people for access to good quality water, a water quality program was initiated in November 1997.

The *Rural Water Quality Advisory Program* is a province-wide service designed to help rural residents assess and improve their water quality. Through the program, a qualified Technologist or Ecologist from our Water Quality Services Unit samples the raw ground water supply. Samples are analysed at a certified laboratory for a broad range of constituents. For further information, please refer to our Program Profile ([PR-200](#)) – Rural Water Quality Advisory Program.

Ground water is tested for 31 constituents, including: major ions, nitrate, trace metals, specific conductivity, pH, and total coliform bacteria, including E-coli (see Appendix A in [PR 200](#) for list). Once results are received, the Technologist or Ecologist follows-up to explain the results and their implications, and provide guidelines on how to improve or protect the raw water source.

The program is available from all Saskatchewan Watershed Authority offices to anyone who relies on a private water system, including: farmers, ranchers, acreage owners, northern operators and trailer park residents.

Need More Information?

Call the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority's Water Quality Office toll free at 1-866-TEST-H20 (1-866-837-8420) or contact any of the offices listed below.

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Offices

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Saskatoon Office

101 – 108 Research Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3R3
Ph: (306) 933-7442
Fax: (306) 933-6820
E-mail: comm@swa.ca

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Yorkton Regional Office

2nd Floor, 120 Smith Street East
Yorkton, SK S3N 3V3
Ph: (306) 786-1490
Fax: (306) 786-1495
E-mail: comm@swa.ca

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Weyburn Regional Office

Box 2003
3rd Floor, City Centre Mall
110 Souris Avenue
Weyburn, SK S4H 2Z9
Ph: (306) 848-2345
Fax: (306) 848-2356
E-mail: comm@swa.ca

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Swift Current Regional Office

Box 5000
3rd Floor, E.I. Wood Building
350 Cheadle Street West
Swift Current, SK S9H 4G3
Ph: (306) 778-8257
Fax: (306) 778-8271
E-mail: comm@swa.ca

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Nipawin Regional Office

Box 2133
201 – 1st Avenue East
Nipawin, SK S0E 1E0
Ph: (306) 862-1750
Fax: (306) 862-1771
E-mail: comm@swa.ca

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority North Battleford Regional Office

402 Royal Bank Tower
1101 - 101st St.
North Battleford, SK S9A 0Z5
Ph: (306) 446-7450
Fax: (306) 446-7461
E-mail: comm@swa.ca

General information about the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, our programs, Fact Sheets and forms can be found on our website at www.swa.ca.