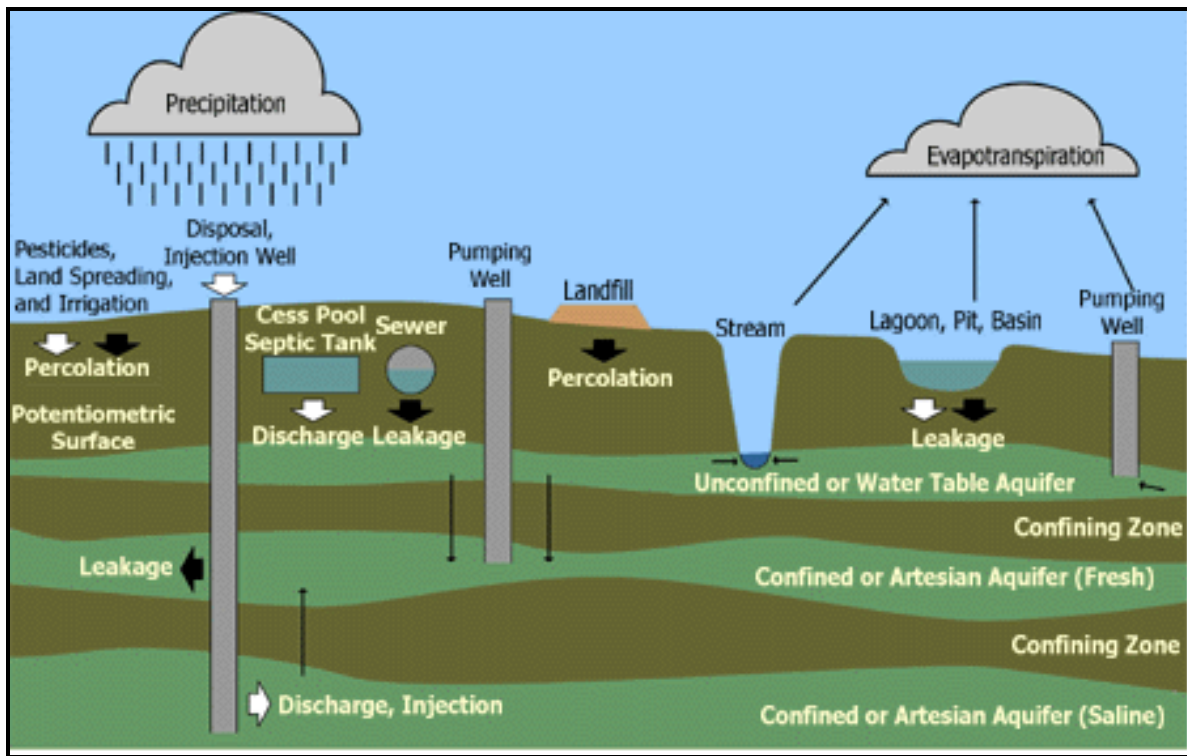


What You Can Do To Prevent Groundwater Pollution

Groundwater is a precious resource which supplies 90% of the Territory's water supplies. While it is possible to utilise surface water from sources such as the Katherine River and Darwin River Dam in the top end, most communities in the Territory such as Alice Springs (Roe Creek Borefield) and Tennant Creek (Kelly Well Basin) rely solely on groundwater for their water supply. Due to the increasing demand on groundwater, it is important that we all manage and protect it to ensure its continuing availability.

If groundwater becomes polluted, it is very difficult to purify an entire aquifer. While the NT Government takes every possible precaution to protect groundwater under the Water Act (regulating waste management and water access), every person can do their bit to prevent pollution.



⇒ Recharge ➡ Contamination → Direction of water movement

How do contaminants affect Groundwater Quality?

Fertilisers, fungicides, insecticides and herbicides are used regularly in small and large scale horticulture and agricultural practices. A variety of chemicals used in these products can enter directly into the aquifer through bore and well heads or can dissolve and percolate through soil and pollute groundwater.

A major source of possible contaminants is the household garbage that goes into landfill. Up to 80% of all household garbage could be recycled. If this occurred, the pollution risk to our groundwater supplies would be dramatically reduced.

A full septic tank or poorly operating drain field allows bacteria and toxic levels of nutrients to contaminate groundwater. It is important that you are aware of separation distances between septic trenches and waste treatment systems under Territory law.

Lack of ongoing maintenance and monitoring of bore infrastructure can lead to corrosion of the bore head and its associated infrastructure. If you are unsure of how your current infrastructure operates or how to maintain it, have your pump tested by a registered driller on a regular basis.

How Can I Assist in Preventing Groundwater Contamination?

To assist in reducing the possibility of contamination, you can:

- Ensure the top of the bore is completed satisfactorily and there is an effective seal at the bore head between the riser pipe, electrical cabling and the casing.
- Apply chemicals according to manufacturers instructions;
- Consider the amount of chemicals/ fertilisers/ pesticides that you use on your property and if they are necessary;
- Regularly check your chemical storage area for any leaks;
- Avoid ground contact when mixing, storing and using chemicals. Consider storing them on a concrete area where spills can be contained & cleaned up.
- Review your fuel and oil storage area – are these contaminants seeping into the ground from the containers?
- Do not store or mix chemicals or fuel near a bore head, a minimum of 100 metres separation is recommended.
- Check sprayer equipment to ensure proper calibration so that recommended application rates are not exceeded;
- Put backflow prevention devices on all taps and hoses used to fill pesticide and herbicide sprayers to prevent back-siphoning and install air break systems such as holding tanks in Chemigation and Fertigation system setups;
- Dispose of containers and unwanted chemicals at your local tip.
- Household chemicals such as paints, thinners, solvents, photographic solutions, cleaning fluids etc. are not disposed of through the septic system;
- Groundwater bores are located outside the required 100 metre separation distance from septic systems. This will prevent the bore water from becoming polluted by any leakages from the septic.
- Carry out regular checks on the condition of your bore;
- Seal any bore that is no longer useable or which may be contaminating or wasting groundwater. Seek advice from our Water Resources Branch and a licensed driller.

For assistance, contact the Water Resources Branch:

Palmerston

3rd Floor Goyder Building, PO Box 496 Palmerston NT 0831 Ph: 89 993678

Katherine

32 Giles St, Katherine NT 0852, PMB 123 Katherine NT 0852 Ph: 89 738831

Alice Springs

1st Floor Alice Plaza, Todd Mall, PO Box 1120 Alice Springs NT 0871 Ph: 89 519215

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