

PLAINFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP
WELLHEAD PROTECTION ORDINANCE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The importance of protecting the Township's well fields cannot be overemphasized. While the Township has abundant and easily accessible groundwater in sand and gravel formations along the Grand River, the groundwater is extremely vulnerable. The groundwater in much of the area is less than 20 feet below ground and there is no protective clay layer above it. If a release of pollutants occurs on the ground it will travel very quickly toward the Township's wells and the Grand River.

The following is a brief summary of the ordinance. Please refer to the ordinance itself (also available on the Township website) for complete details. Please also note that the numbering used in this Executive Summary does not correspond to the numbering used in the ordinance.

I. Purpose

The intent of the ordinance is to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of persons served by the Township's Water Supply System by protecting Groundwater that serves as drinking water. The objectives can be summarized:

1. To minimize the risk of spills, leaks and other discharges into groundwater within the identified Wellhead Protection Zone;
2. To regulate non-compatible land uses within the Wellhead Protection Zone;
3. To prevent and minimize public and private losses due to contamination of the public water supply;
4. To minimize interruptions to businesses by only regulating specific land-use activities within the Wellhead Protection Zone.

II. Prohibited Activities Within the Wellhead Protection Zone

1. Handling Regulated Substances, including fuels, exceeding 55 gallons or 440 pounds, unless a variance is obtained;
2. Septic tanks;
3. Private wells for drinking water or irrigation, if public water service is reasonably available.

4. Excavation or mining of sand, gravel or soil from a contaminated property, unless the owner has established that the activity will not cause an adverse impact;
5. An abandoned well, i.e., a well the use of which has been discontinued for more than a year;
6. Geothermal wells for heating and cooling.

III. Requirements and Restrictions Within the Wellhead Protection Zone

1. The use of contaminated soil or fill material is prohibited;
2. Floor drains must be connected to the sanitary sewer system or an on site holding tank;
3. When a well is abandoned/plugged, formal well abandonment logs must be provided to the Township.
4. Commercial vehicle washing must be conducted on a wash pad, to prevent storm water run on and wash water run off;
5. Pressure washing and steam cleaning related to industrial activities are permitted only within covered and completely contained areas;
6. Cooling systems shall be closed-looped;
7. Salt and associated sand mix piles must be stored on an impermeable surface and covered. Stockpiles cannot be located near surface waters, in flood plains, or areas with steep slopes, and shall be designed to prevent surface water run off;
8. Above ground storage tanks shall be certified, installed, and operated in accordance with all local and state regulations. No such tank shall be located in direct contact with site soils;
9. New underground storage tanks are prohibited. However, a facility presently using an underground storage tank for fuel or lubricants may replace an existing tank with one satisfying applicable laws and rules, but such replacement may not exceed the capacity of the existing tank;
10. Solid waste dumpsters must have lids and be stored on a paved surface;
11. A facility that has Regulated Substances in excess of 55 gallons or 440 pounds shall keep an inventory list and current Material Safety Data Sheets;
12. Such facilities shall have impervious floor surfaces and work areas. Loading and unloading areas shall be isolated from storm drains to prevent potential spills from contaminating storm water. If storm water run off is possible, the area shall be designed to reduce storm water run on, and to direct drainage to an appropriate collection device;

13. Such facilities shall have emergency spill response equipment as needed to contain any spills in storage, loading/unloading work areas;
14. Regulated substance storage units must be completely contained, isolated from floor and storm drains, have sealed surfaces, and comply with applicable fire safety regulations. Regulated substances shall be stored inside whenever feasible. Regulated substances stored outdoors must be in product tight containers, protected from weather, leakage, accidental damage and vandalism;
15. Secondary containment must be provided for Regulated Substances storage units containing Regulated Substances other than fuel.

IV. Non-Conforming Facilities

A facility which is not in compliance with one or more of the ordinance requirements will have two years from the effective date of the ordinance to eliminate such non-compliance, or otherwise obtain the necessary variance. The Director of Public Services has the authority to require compliance with one year, if the director determines that a given facility poses a greater than normal risk to Groundwater.

V. Regulations Applicable to Specific Activities

Fueling establishments scrap and salvage operations, and motor vehicle repair garages and service stations are subject to additional specific requirements, to help minimize the risk of a release of Regulated Substances into the groundwater.

VI. Spill Contingency Plan

Facilities within the Wellhead Protection Zone that use more than 55 gallons or 440 pounds of Regulated Substances, and the specific activities identified above must all submit a Spill Contingency Plan to the Director of Public Services. The plan shall contain a written analysis of the potential for a release of a Regulated Substance, identify all release prevention measures that will minimize the likelihood and/or reduce the impact of such a release, and identify procedure to be followed in the event of a release.

VII. Variances and Appeal Rights

If a facility operator within the Wellhead Protection Zone believes the requirements impose an unreasonable burden, a variance may be sought from the Director of Public Services. The director may grant, deny or grant partial or different relief, and may relieve, on temporary or permanent basis, strict compliance. The director shall be guided by the primary goal of protecting the water supply, without creating undue hardship.

Any person who disagrees with a decision of the director, or whose variance request has been denied, may appeal to the Township Board, or its designated committee.

VIII. Civil Infraction

A person who violates the ordinance will be responsible for a municipal civil infraction violation, and subject to a fine of not more than \$500.00, together with costs.