

# Proposed Groundwater Standards

Wis. Admin. Code NR 140  
Cycle 10



## DATCP's Authority for Groundwater Monitoring

Chapter 160 of Wisconsin Statutes outlines the groundwater monitoring responsibilities of state agencies. The statute requires agencies to communicate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to identify when:

- Substances are detected in groundwater that exceed an existing enforcement standard or preventive action limit, or
- Compounds are detected that do not have an existing state or federal standard.

### What is DATCP's role in groundwater protection?

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) collects groundwater samples from private drinking wells, monitoring wells, and irrigation wells located on or near agricultural fields. Several hundred samples are collected every year. DATCP's laboratory analyzes these samples for approximately 100 pesticide compounds and nitrate.

### What is Wis. Admin. Code NR 140?

NR 140 is the legal framework that defines how state agencies administer the law under Wis. Stat. § 160. Under the law, DNR is responsible for creating new standards within NR 140. When DATCP detects pesticides in groundwater samples, the data is shared with DNR and DHS so that new standards can be considered.

### What is Cycle 10?

Cycle 10 is a term used to define the tenth-cycle of new groundwater standards creation under NR 140.

### What is an enforcement standard and preventive action limit standard?

Enforcement standards and preventive action limits are numeric values that are determined by health officials. They represent a concentration that, if exceeded, poses a public health concern. They are defined by state law [see

Wis. Stats. §§ 160.01(2) and (6) at <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/160.01>].

### What happens when a pesticide exceeds the enforcement standard in a private well?

If a pesticide is found to exceed its enforcement standard, DATCP may enact greater controls on the use of that pesticide in the affected area. DATCP's authority to establish pesticide use controls is found in Wis. Stats. §§ 93, 94, and 160, Wis. Admin. Code §§ ATCP 30 and 31.

### Should I test my water?

Yes. All private well owners should test their well water for nitrate and bacteria at least once per year. Testing for these are common and relatively inexpensive. Pesticide testing is more expensive and many commercial laboratories do not offer these testing services. The Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene and the Environmental Analysis Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point both offer pesticide screening tests. Where cost is a concern, homeowners should first perform a low-cost test for nitrate. If nitrate is present above 10 mg/L (milligrams per liter) **and** you live in a sandy agricultural area where groundwater is less than 20 feet deep, then consider testing for pesticides.

### If detected in my drinking water, how can I make my water safe to drink?

An activated carbon filter installed and maintained on your service line is typically an effective treatment option for pesticides. However, activated carbon will **not** reduce your concentration of nitrate.

### Where can I find testing information?

Testing private wells:

- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/private.htm>
- <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Wells/privateWellTest.html>

### Where can I find more information?

DATCP has requested DNR to consider the following pesticide compounds for standards development under Cycle 10. Fact sheets for each compound are available at

[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/GroundwaterStdsPesticides.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/GroundwaterStdsPesticides.aspx).

- Dacthal, Dacthal MTP, Dacthal TPA
- Glyphosate, Glyphosate AMPA
- Isoxaflutole, Isoxaflutole DKN, Isoxaflutole BA
- Neonicotinoid Insecticides (general)
- Clothianidin
- Imidacloprid
- Thiamethoxam
- Sulfentrazone
- Thiencarbazone-methyl

Other resources:

- Health-based standards:  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/gws.htm>
- NR 140 rule process:  
<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Groundwater/NR140.html>

## Who do I contact for questions?

DATCP Groundwater Specialist

(608) 224-4503

[datcpgw@wisconsin.gov](mailto:datcpgw@wisconsin.gov)

*This fact sheet provides general information. Wisconsin law (Wis. Stat. § 160) provides the process for establishing state groundwater standards in the event no federal standard already exists.*



**Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**

Division of Agricultural Resource Management | Bureau of Agrichemical Management

<https://datcp.wi.gov>

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