## If the water is so safe, why all the testing?

Science has made great advances over the past 50 years. New drugs have been discovered that have helped us live longer and healthier lives. New pesticides and herbicides have been developed to help increase crop production, feeding more people at a lower cost. Gasoline and gasoline additives have allowed us to travel more at a lower cost; fuel oils have allowed us to more dependably heat our homes and places of business; chemicals around our homes have given us conveniences that were unheard of before.

Unfortunately, some of these advances and conveniences have had an effect upon our aquifers. Our corner gas stations, green lawns, landfills, cesspools, septic tanks, and use of "new chemicals," while making our lives easier, have also had an effect upon our groundwater. Very simply, what we put on the ground eventually winds up in our groundwater.

So, we look for all the chemicals that New York State and the federal government feel we should be looking for. But, beyond that, we even look for chemicals that we don't even have to, all to insure that the water we serve you is pure and safe.

## So what do you do if you find a chemical in the water that shouldn't be there?

We can detect chemicals in our water-testing laboratory at very low levels. In fact, we measure chemicals down to **parts per billion.** To understand this, **a part per billion would be equal to one second in the life of a 32-year-old person.** If we begin to detect the presence of an undesirable chemical in a well's water, we will shut down the well in question. The director of our laboratory can call for the shut down of any well at any time!

If the "raw" water coming from a well has a chemical which exceeds the allowable maximum, we can put the raw water through a filtration system which removes any impurities.

## Well, if you have the ability to clean up our drinking water before it gets to our homes, why should we care about groundwater pollution?

It's a very simple answer. There is a significant expense in removing pollutants from your water. We can make your drinking water pure by filtering it through special carbon filtration systems. But each of these systems can cost up to a million dollars to construct. Currently, while most of our wells don't need such filters, they are being used on approximately 10% of our wells.

## What are you doing to prevent pollution of our aquifers?

Since 1990, the SCWA has been in the forefront of aquifer protection by actively pursuing polluters, shutting them down and requiring remediation and restitution. We have also enlarged our wellfields by acquiring larger and larger sites. We sponsor educational programs in local schools and a special research program at Stony Brook University designed to educate the public on pollution prevention. We also sponsored and essentially wrote the pine barrens protection bills that have resulted in setting aside 100,000 acres of pristine watershed areas for future water supplies in central Suffolk. We not only protect our current water supplies, but we are protecting the water supplies for all future generations.

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