

# Keeping Your Drinking Water SAFE

[www.sourcewaterprotection.on.ca](http://www.sourcewaterprotection.on.ca)

Your home is located near a municipal water supply well, in an area where products you use in and around your home have the potential to reach the well and contaminate drinking water.

You may have household products that must be handled and stored very carefully, because they contain chemicals that pose a significant threat to local drinking water.

## DNAPLs & Drinking Water

Chemicals called Dense, Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids, or DNAPLs, are particularly nasty pollutants that are more difficult to clean up than other types of chemical spills, such as fuel. Many common household products can contain chemicals that are DNAPLs:

- Adhesives, cleaners and even nail polish removers
- Wood preservatives and treating oils
- Products used to clean metal and electronics
- Products used for automobile repair and degreasers
- Paint removers, furniture strippers and varnishes
- Spot removers, dry cleaning chemicals and rug-cleaning fluids

Some products have DNAPL chemicals in their ingredients list. Other products may break down into a DNAPL chemical if they reach soil and water.



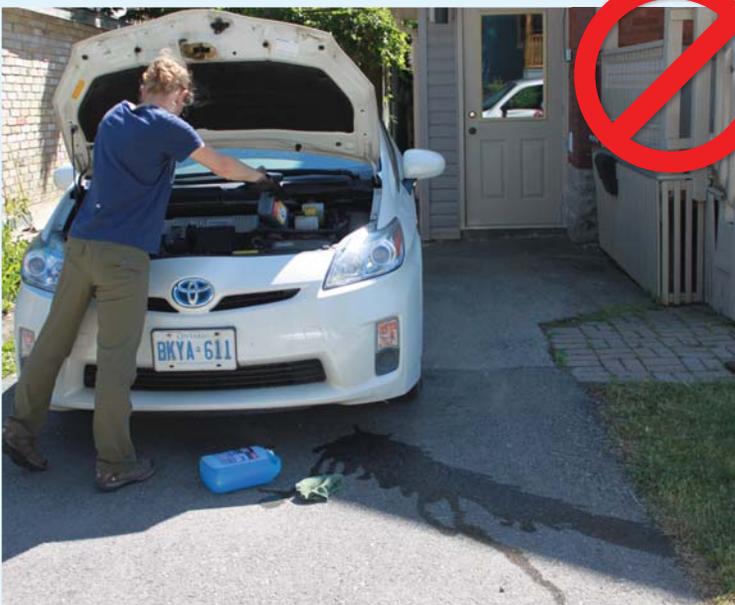
Hazardous chemicals should not be poured down your drain



Safely dispose of hazardous chemicals by taking them to your local hazardous waste drop off location. Used chemicals can be poured into a clean glass jar with a tight-fitting lid to transport to a depot. Be sure to label them.

DNAPL chemicals are heavier than water and do not dissolve easily. If they are spilled, DNAPLs tend to sink down into the ground and can contaminate the soil and groundwater that we depend on for our drinking water. DNAPLs like PCBs and mercury can stay in the environment for decades, while others can become more toxic as they break down.

Even small amounts of DNAPLs can be very toxic to humans and the environment, which means that even a little getting into water, makes the water harmful to consume. DNAPLs are very difficult, and expensive, to clean up.



While working on your vehicle be careful that chemicals are not washing directly onto soil and into storm drains. Use a drip pan and avoid rainy days.



Be careful not to apply chemicals such as varnish, wood oils and paint where they could soak directly into the ground if spilled.

### What can you do?

When people who live near wells use and store DNAPLs, that's a significant drinking water threat, according to the Thames-Sydenham Region Drinking Water Source Protection Plan.

Follow the tips below to prevent any chemicals, including DNAPLs, from entering the soil or groundwater or getting into the storm drain.

#### Use household chemicals properly

- Read the label and hazard symbol.
- Follow the instructions on safe use and storage.
- Use sealable containers to capture spills or leaks to reduce the chance of chemicals being washed onto the ground or into the storm drain.

#### Store household chemicals safely

- Always keep products in their original containers, and keep all safety information.
- If the product is removed from its original container, label it.
- Store all products at room temperature, off the ground, in tightly sealed containers, away from floor drains, vents and sources of heat.
- If you can smell your cleaning and chemical products, check that the lids or caps are tightly closed and look for leaks.
- If a product container is in poor condition, place the entire container in a plastic bucket. Surround it with a non-flammable absorbent, such as kitty litter, to absorb spills.



Before refinishing furniture outside lay down a tarp or choose to apply it on a cement pad.

#### Dispose of leftover household chemical products safely

- Do not wash products onto the ground or where they can reach storm drain systems.
- Never burn household chemical containers, and do not re-use empty containers.
- Your municipality has drop off locations for hazardous waste. Keep these chemicals out of your household garbage.
- Contact your municipality for instructions on where, when, and how to dispose of DNAPL chemicals and other hazardous waste.

We all need to make sure that DNAPLs don't get into our water systems.

Buy only what you need – Use it up – Dispose of any remaining product responsibly.



Store household chemical products safely.



Thames - Sydenham Region

**For More Information go to:**  
[www.sourcewaterprotection.on.ca](http://www.sourcewaterprotection.on.ca)

With support provided by

