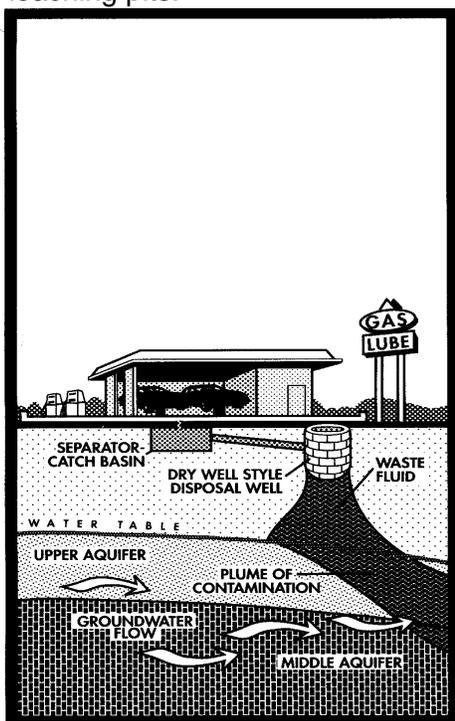


The Floor Drain Requirement: Wellhead Protection Regulation

Why are floor drains a concern?

Industrial floor drain discharges to the ground are suspected sources of contamination of several public drinking water supplies in Massachusetts. There are many cases where floor drain discharges have caused soil and/or groundwater contamination. Costs associated with clean up of public water supply contamination can run into the millions of dollars. The most common types of unauthorized systems are floor drains and/or sump sinks that lead to dry wells, septic systems, or subsurface leaching pits.



Local Requirements*

MA Wellhead Protection Regulation, 310 CMR 22.21(2)(a)(8), requires that existing and future floor drains that discharge to the ground be prohibited through a local municipal control. Zoning bylaws only address future uses; a board of health regulation or general bylaw must be adopted in order to meet this requirement. A floor drain control could also be incorporated into an existing local hazardous material regulation.

Why a floor drain control is beneficial

Industrial discharges to the ground are easily preventable. Discharges from floor drains occur more frequently at smaller facilities like dry cleaners, auto repair, body shops, and machine shops. In many instances, floor drains frequently continue to discharge to old dry wells or septic systems after a facility's sanitary wastes are redirected to public sewers. The DEP recommends local Boards of Health establish a local floor drain program. Such a program could include regular inspections and technical assistance to businesses. DEP recommends prioritizing implementation of a local program as follows:

- Work with the building and plumbing inspectors to ensure that all new building and plumbing permits are issued to reflect the DEP's floor drain requirements.
- Target local inspection programs to facilities located in Zone IIs and Interim Wellhead Protection Areas.

Plumbing Code limitations

DEP's regulation, 310 CMR 22.21(2)(a)(8) applies to facilities that store hazardous material/waste as well as facilities where oily and/or hazardous liquid wastes are produced. The Plumbing Code applies to the latter type of business only.

* Applies to communities developing new wells >100,000 gallons/day, or communities increasing water withdrawals by >100,000 gpd.