

# News Release

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Environmental  
Quality

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## **DEQ Conducting Additional Well Sampling in Lebanon**

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will conduct another round of well-water sampling in downtown Lebanon in January and February. Sampling of residential wells conducted in 2008 found several wells with industrial solvent levels in excess of state and federal drinking water standards. DEQ hopes to identify and sample wells not previously tested. DEQ currently provides alternate water supplies to property owners who have contaminated wells and are not using city water.

As part of an ongoing investigation, well water samples have been tested for industrial solvents. The results are compared to state and federal drinking water standards called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs). These standards are used by health agencies to protect public health by limiting the levels of contaminants in public drinking water systems. Privately owned wells are not required to meet the drinking water standards. However, the standards are useful for evaluating the quality of well water.

DEQ previously identified eight wells that have water contaminated in excess of the MCL for the solvent tetrachloroethylene, also known as PCE. The MCL for PCE is 5 parts per billion. The eight wells had levels between 5 and 110 parts per billion PCE. Two of the wells were also contaminated with another chemical, trichloroethylene (TCE) above the MCL. Four of these contaminated wells are currently used for household water, but DEQ is providing bottled water to those households for drinking water use as a temporary protective measure.

DEQ and the Oregon Public Health Division recommend that residents who use well water and have contaminant levels above the MCL use an alternate water supply for household uses to reduce exposure to the solvent contamination. As a temporary measure, DEQ is offering affected residents bottled water at no cost.

Residents can be exposed to the contamination by drinking the water, or using it for cooking, bathing, cleaning and irrigation. For residents that do not have city water available, using bottled water for drinking and cooking will significantly reduce

exposure until a permanent solution is implemented. Well owners who are connected to city water for household uses, but use well water for irrigation have much less exposure to the chemicals.

DEQ wants to identify all contaminated wells in the area, which is roughly framed by 10<sup>th</sup> Street to the west, Haitt Street to the east, Gore Drive to the north, and C Street to the south. DEQ has begun informing well drillers about the presence of the contamination in an attempt to discourage new wells being drilled in contaminated areas. DEQ is also working to inform home buyers and sellers of properties in the area of the potential for contamination. DEQ provides testing within the project area for solvents at no cost to property owners.

DEQ will be working with the well owners, the City of Lebanon, and the Oregon Public Health Division to determine a long-term solution to protect residents. One option may be for DEQ to pay to connect those with contaminated wells to the Lebanon city water system.

The Oregon Public Health Division is completing a Health Consultation to examine the health risks associated with the contamination. The Health Consultation should be published in early 2009.

DEQ has been investigating solvent contamination in Lebanon for several years. The source of some of the contamination is dry cleaners. Three dry-cleaning facilities are currently being cleaned up. There may also be other unknown sources, as these solvents are also used by other industries. Even though DEQ will continue its investigation of sources of contamination, some sources of the contamination may never be found.

Those with questions about the well-water contamination should contact Don Hanson at DEQ, (541) 687-7349 or by email at [hanson.don@deq.state.or.us](mailto:hanson.don@deq.state.or.us). Those with health-related questions should contact Sujata Joshi at the Public Health Division at (971) 673-1213 or by email at [Sujata.joshi@state.or.us](mailto:Sujata.joshi@state.or.us).

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