

## What are groundwater quality standards?

1. Minimum criteria- all groundwater must not be contaminated by carcinogenic or toxic substance discharges.
2. Maximum contaminant- standard represents the maximum amount of particular contaminants that will be tolerated in a particular class of water. Maximum contaminant levels (Primary Drinking Water Standards) are generally in accord with EPA standards contained in the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Permits will not be issued under F.S. § 403.088 when maximum contaminant levels are exceeded by a discharge activity. Secondary standards are also monitored for compliance in new facilities. Existing facilities are exempted from monitoring and compliance with the secondary standards.

Under Chapter 403, Florida Statutes, discharge permits for stationary installations (structures which may emit water contaminants in quantities prohibited by the rules) are required. Agricultural water management systems are exempt from this requirement under F.S. § 403.927(2), but are regulated pursuant to Chapter 373. However, the ultimate point of discharge is still regulated by DER. Subsequently, when a farming activity pollutes water bodies outside the system, or the groundwater is polluted due to leaching which causes distant points in the aquifer to be polluted, the farmer may be liable.

The Water Management Districts have the power to control consumptive uses of groundwater in areas of known groundwater contamination. In other words, through Florida Statutes Ch. 373, the WMD's can restrict consumptive use through permitting when contamination is found.

## Does this include stormwater runoff?

Stormwater runoff is water flowing off of the land into streams and the ground after a rainstorm. This stormwater is often contaminated with the chemicals and products used on the land the stormwater runs off of.

EPA regulates stormwater discharges associated with agriculture. At the time of publication, EPA exempts from permitting agricultural stormwater discharges and agricultural return flows composed entirely of return flow from irrigated areas. However, EPA does not exempt agricultural return flows that are not composed entirely of return flows from irrigated agriculture.

EPA has stricter stormwater runoff requirements for industrial and municipal runoff.

## What are the permit requirements?

Generally, permits will be issued only when an applicant can establish that the activity or installation in question will not degrade receiving waters below applicable standards. Test results and the installation of pollution control equipment are often required to guarantee such claims. The burden of proving entitlement to a permit is on the applicant.

In its rules DER expressly provides that groundwater discharge considerations are to be incorporated into existing permit requirements. The main purpose of this rule is to prohibit discharging into groundwater where the discharge causes a violation of the water quality standards and groundwater minimum criteria.

However, a zone of discharge (also known as a "mixing zone") may be established by permit or rule. A zone of discharge is a predefined three dimensional area in the ground around an installation where most primary and secondary ground water quality standards do not apply and effluents have an opportunity to diffuse or degrade somewhat before leaving the boundaries of the zone of discharge.