



WATER RINGS

MTBE: Cleaning the air or contaminating the water?

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Recent media scrutiny has exposed the public to a problem that the drinking water industry has been contending with for many years. The problem is water contamination from MTBE. Reports have repeatedly told horror stories of soil and water contamination all across the United States.

MTBE, or methyl tertiary butyl ether, is a member of a group of chemicals commonly known as fuel oxygenates. They are added to gasoline to increase its oxygen content, thus making it burn more cleanly and efficiently. MTBE has been used in gasoline since 1979 as an octane enhancing replacement for lead, and in higher concentrations since the Clean Air Act of 1990 to enhance combustion and reduce tailpipe emissions. Although there are other substances available such as ethanol, MTBE is the most commonly used fuel oxygenate.

The use of MTBE has indeed yielded clean air benefits. Unfortunately, the main cause of contamination, leaking underground gasoline storage tanks, has resulted in MTBE being detected in groundwater supplies coast to coast. Small gasoline spills and improper disposal are also sources of groundwater contamination. Only a few gallons of gasoline containing MTBE could contaminate a large volume of water.

Many chemicals in gasoline, including MTBE, may be harmful in drinking water. The US-EPA has classified MTBE as a potential human carcinogen. It is highly soluble and can travel faster and farther in water than any other gasoline component. These factors alone have generated widespread concern that drinking water supplies and human health may be at risk.

The North Wales Water Authority realizes that MTBE contamination presents a real and growing threat to our drinking water resources. The large clean up costs and possible health risks associated with MTBE contamination demand immediate focus on ways to prevent future problems and remediate those that already have occurred. The Authority has been routinely monitoring MTBE for many years and in those areas impacted by gasoline spills or releases, has voluntarily increased monitoring frequencies. MTBE has never been detected in any groundwater supply that is used by the Authority.

Protecting vital groundwater supplies that are in constant jeopardy is a fundamental issue for the North Wales Water Authority. We realize that while air quality standards must continue to be improved, it should not be at the expense of our drinking water resources or the health of our customers.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Question: *How can I protect myself from water utility worker impersonators?*

Answer:

Due to the recent events that have occurred in our area with individuals posing as water utility workers, we are offering you the following information in respect to the North Wales Water Authority:

1. Ask for company identification. Every employee of the North Wales Water Authority has an identification card. The card includes a picture of the employee along with our company logo (located on the front page of this newsletter).
2. All of our company vehicles have our logo on the side which includes the company name and the Water Wizard. The vehicles are either white or blue.
3. If you are unsure that the individual is an employee, please call our office at 215-699-4836 and confirm the individual with one of our customer service representatives.
4. Generally, if we need access to the inside of your home, we make an appointment with you.
5. If there is a water main break, we will simply knock on your door to notify you, but we do not need to go inside your home.

If you have any questions, please contact our office. Thank you.

Water Wizard Makes Debut



Pictured from L to R, Alison and Tacy Bradbury of Green Lane.

The Water Wizard, the official trademarked mascot of the North Wales Water Authority, made its debut on Sunday, February 27, 2000 at the Montgomery Mall for the annual Mardi Gras event.

The Water Wizard will be making appearances at schools and local events, including community days.

If you have an event that you would like the North Wales Water Authority and the Water Wizard to participate in, please contact our public relations department.

Keep your eyes peeled for the Water Wizard in your neighborhood!

Information Included in the NWWA Website

If you have not yet signed onto our newly designed website you could be missing out on valuable information about your water. Below are some of the highlighted areas of our website.

- Water Quality Report
- Water Hardness Information
- Where Your Water Comes From
- New Services
 - AutoFlow
 - Lateral Maintenance Program
- Conservation Tips

- Backflow Prevention
- Water Treatment Process
- How to Read Your Bill
- Water Rates
- How to Read Your Meter
- Automatic Meter Reading Program
- Company Literature
- Cool Stuff
 - Dye Tablets
 - Shut-off Valve Tag

...and much more. Be sure to log on often because we are always updating and adding information.

WATER RINGS IS PUBLISHED
QUARTERLY TO SERVE OUR
CUSTOMERS IN:

**NORTH WALES BOROUGH AND LOWER GWYNEDD, MONTGOMERY, NEW
BRITAIN, UPPER DUBLIN, AND UPPER GWYNEDD, AND WHITPAIN
TOWNSHIPS.**