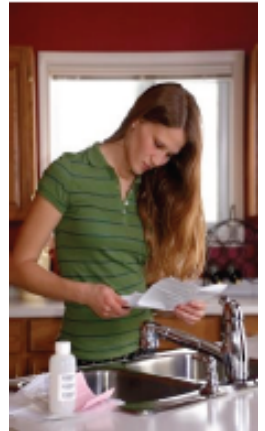


## Rhode Island Private Well Owners Take Action To Protect Their Drinking Water & Their Families

Across the nation, people agree that protecting drinking water is important. Rhode Island private well owners are no different and testing their drinking water is their responsibility.

### **Situation**

About 100,000 Rhode Islanders get their drinking water from private wells. Unlike public water supplies that are regularly tested and operated by professionals, private well owners are responsible for assuring that their water is safe to drink for them and their family. As a result, private well owners need education and information on proper well maintenance, potential contamination risks to their wells and how to protect against these risks. They need to know where to have their well water tested and what to test for.



The Rhode Island Department of Health and the University of Rhode Island Home\*A\*Syst Program's Private Well Protection Education efforts provide information and training to private well owners on proper testing, treatment, and maintenance of their drinking water supply. Working in communities throughout the state, private well owners are provided with the tools and knowledge to assess and reduce water quality contamination risks around their homes. One way we accomplish this is through 8 – 12 evening programs offered in Rhode Island communities yearly.



### **Impacts**

We have surveyed workshop participants six months or more after they attended a program to determine what actions they have taken to protect their drinking water well. We found Rhode Islanders are taking action to protect their families' health.

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Survey results indicate that workshop participants take action to protect their private drinking water well.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Had well water tested and/or addressed water system maintenance</b>										
Had water tested	44%	56%	33%	75%	76%	78%	75%	66%	71%	36%
Conducted a wellhead inspection	70%	76%	55%	68%	77%	77%	75%	68%	68%	66%
Had water treatment installed	13%	16%	0%	18%	14%	11%	12%	20%	13%	9%
Had maintenance on water treatment	25%	20%	22%	24%	17%	16%	19%	27%	40%	18%
<b>Adopted practices for water quality protection</b>										
Had septic system maintenance	35%	24%	22%	27%	24%	31%	28%	29%	Not Asked	25%
Properly disposed of household hazardous waste	31%	24%	22%	24%	31%	32%	33%	37%	20%	16%
Began using nontoxic alternatives	33%	36%	44%	23%	23%	32%	28%	29%	25%	14%
Properly disposed of used motor oil	25%	36%	11%	10%	14%	20%	23%	15%	14%	7%
Relocated pets from well area	53%	66%	11%	19%	24%	23%	8%	18%	27%	30%
Changed use of fertilizers and pesticides near well	21%	16%	11%	15%	14%	10%	13%	10%	9%	11%
<b>Requested more information or shared what they learned with others</b>										
Shared workshop information with others	53%	53%	77%	49%	67%	68%	66%	71%	84%	70%
Contacted RIDOH or URI for information	60%	44%	33%	Not Asked	69%	54%	43%	64%	80%	45%

Note: The majority of responses indicated they were already using best management practices for drinking water protection. For example, not using fertilizers and pesticides near the well or properly disposing of used motor oil.