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**TIPS for HOMEOWNERS # 4  
GASOLINE CONTAMINATION**

**Question:** How can gasoline enter my well water?

**Answer:** Over the past fifty years, many buried gasoline tanks have been abandoned or not properly monitored and are now leaking gasoline into the environment. Unfortunately, once gasoline or fuel oil is lost from the tank into the environment it can travel through the ground for long distances and can cause well water problems for many years. It is very important that underground tanks not be abandoned with product in them since they will invariably corrode through and contaminate wells.

**Question:** If gasoline or other fuel contamination is a concern, for what should I test?

**Answer:** For gasoline you should test for BTEX which stands for Benzene, Toluene, Ethylbenzene, and Xylene. These compounds are major components of gasoline. Fredericktowne Labs performs this test for \$90.00 in water and \$100.00 in soil.

Other compounds recommended for testing in addition to BTEX are MTBE and Naphthalene. MTBE stands for Methyl tertiary butyl ether. This compound is a gasoline additive (octane enhancer). Naphthalene is a component present in fuel oil and is used to differentiate between gasoline and fuel oil contamination problems. The cost for a BTEX scan plus MTBE and Naphthalene is \$110.00.

If you feel that your water supply is being contaminated by a leaking underground storage tank, you may want to contact the Maryland Department of Environment, Leaking Underground Storage Tank Division, 1-800-633-6101, Ext. 3442.

