



# Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas

## Drinking Water

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) conducted a public health assessment (PHA) to address possible chemical exposure from municipal and residential wells at the Torch Lake Superfund Site and surrounding areas. The PHA found that:

- municipal water is safe and meets drinking water requirements/standards; and
- private residential wells may have previously been installed or screened in stumpsand; however, there is not enough information on possible chemical levels in these wells.

### What is the Torch Lake Superfund Site and its surrounding areas?

The Torch Lake Superfund Site is located in Houghton County in the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan's Upper Peninsula (see map on back page). The Torch Lake Superfund Site is a large, complex site dealing mostly with stumpsands left behind from historical copper mining activities.

The Site and its surrounding areas include, but are not limited to, Lake Linden, Hubbell/Tamarck City, Mason, Point Mills and Isle-Royale. Historical copper mining and reclamation activities have occurred throughout the Keweenaw Peninsula. People may run into the remains from these activities in many locations.

### Municipal Water at the Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas

Municipal water wells were tested in 2010 in the City of Houghton, Village of Lake Linden, and Osceola Township and did not contain regulated chemicals at levels that would harm people's health.

If you have questions about the municipal water in your area, contact the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department (WUPHD), your local department of public works, or the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) drinking water office.

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### Private Residential Wells at the Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas

Only a small number of private residential wells were sampled in 2010. Because there was not enough information, MDCH recommends that more data be collected to address possible chemical exposure from private residential wells screened or installed in stumpsand.

Stumpsand piles are located throughout the Torch Lake Superfund Site and surrounding areas. Private residential wells may be installed or screened in stumpsand. WUPHD has maps of some areas where residents can check the locations of stumpsand piles.

## Map of the Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas



Groundwater quality is highly variable in the Western Upper Peninsula. Some groundwater sources may have unhealthy levels of nitrates, nitrites, fluoride, sodium, and uranium. Chlorides, hardness, sulfate, and iron can be at levels that cause the water to have an unpleasant taste or affect plumbing fixtures. Water from improperly constructed wells, such as point wells and dug wells, or drilled wells in poor repair may have coliform bacteria, such as *E. coli*, and other disease-causing organisms in the water.

The only way to know if well water is safe to drink is to obtain water from a properly constructed drilled well and to test the water. Water test kits are available at the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department (WUPHD) offices. See [www.wuphd.org](http://www.wuphd.org) for more information.

### For more information

To learn more about the Torch Lake Superfund Site and the surrounding area, contact MDCH at **1-800-648-6942** or visit [www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxics) and look for the *Torch Lake Superfund Site and Surrounding Areas* link under the *Health Assessments and Related Document* tab.

