



JOHN ENGLER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



RUSSELL J. HARDING
DIRECTOR

February 15, 2002

TO: Michigan Registered Water Well Drilling Contractors
Water Well Suppliers

FROM: Michael Gaber, Chief
Well Construction Unit
Ground Water Supply Section
Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division

SUBJECT: Coated Bentonite Tablets Advisory

This memo is to advise you that "coated" bentonite tablets, pellets, or chips are not approved for use in water well construction in Michigan. A recent out-of-state incident where coated bentonite tablets were used to grout the well casings resulted in high concentrations of acetone (51,000 micrograms per liter or parts per billion) in two monitoring wells. Subsequent laboratory tests detected high levels of acetone contamination from the tablets. The tablets were coated with isopropanol (isopropyl alcohol) to retard hydration and the acetone may have been an impurity in the alcohol coating. The coated bentonite tablets are manufactured by Polymer Drilling Systems Company (PDSCO) and are marketed by Colloid Environmental Technology Company (CETCO) and PDSCO under the product names of "CETCO Coated Tablets" and "Pel-Plug TR 30/60 Coated Bentonite Pellets" respectfully. A PDSCO representative informed Department of Environmental Quality, Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division, staff that their firm has recalled these products from the market and is in the process of changing the coating formulation.

Bentonite tablets, pellets, chips, or slurry grouts used for grouting or plugging water wells regulated by Part 127, 1976 PA 368, as amended, Michigan Water Well Construction and Pump Installation Code (Code), are not to be used unless they are listed under American National Standards Institute/National Sanitation Foundation (ANSI/NSF) Standard 60, for potable water contact. An NSF International representative has confirmed that coated bentonite tablets are not listed under Standard 60 and that no manufacturers have submitted coated bentonite tablets or chips to NSF International for review. Therefore, the use of coated bentonite tablets does not meet the provisions of R 325.1640 of the Code.

If you have any coated bentonite tablets, pellets, or chips in stock, it is advised that you refrain from using them to construct or plug water wells. If you have any questions please contact me by phone at 517-241-1374, or by fax at 517-241-1328.

MSG:ckp

cc: PDSCO
CETCO
Local Health Departments
District Offices, DEQ
Wm. Elgar Brown, DEQ