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PENNSYLVANIA WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION

Public Education Committee

This municipal water quality educational material was sponsored by the **Public Education Committee** of the **Pennsylvania Water Environment Association (PWEA)**. PWEA is a Member Association of the **Water Environment Federation (WEF)**.

Please visit our **Public Education Toolbox** on PWEA's website for other public educational material for the municipal water quality industry.

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What is the Difference between Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment?

Municipal Water Quality Public Educational Information

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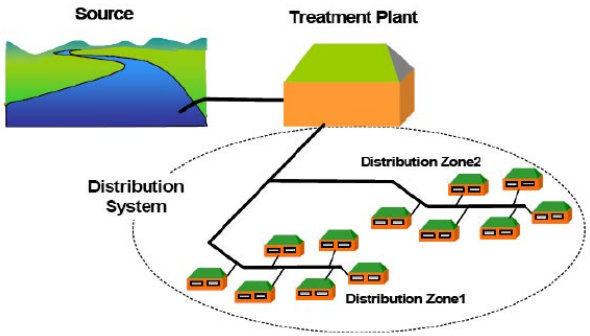
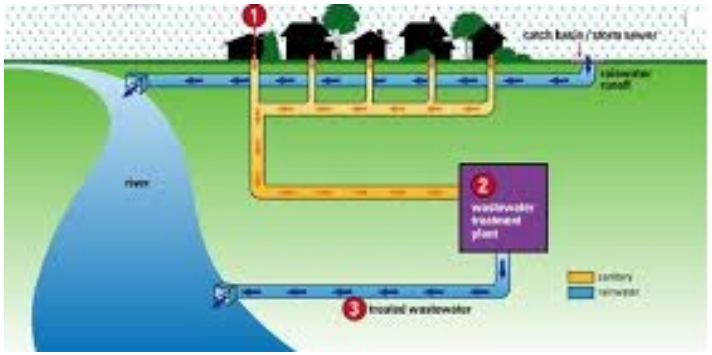
What's the Difference between Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment?

A **Water Treatment Plant (WTP)** generally takes water from ground, surface, or rainwater sources, makes it drinkable and distributes it to water storage tanks or directly to people.



A **Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)** generally collects sewage from your house and other waste water (and in some cases stormwater) from various sites, cleans it and releases it back into the environment at a safe level for humans, fish, and plants to be around.



Water Treatment Plants (WTP) generally are smaller operations than Wastewater Treatment Plants WWTP) because of the water quality coming in. WTPs pull water from a local river, lake or well. This water is generally clean (compared to sewage!) and just need a bit of cleaning and disinfection. Small amounts of pollutants (turbidity) are removed and the water is fit for human consumption and use in our homes, businesses and industries.

Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTP) take pretty nasty sewage water (from industries and homes and businesses and schools) and removes most of the nastiness. This is why WWTPs are much larger and more elaborate. The level of treatment at a wastewater plant is significant in order to remove the wide range of pollutants in the sewage. The cleansed water from a WWTP is disinfected and released back into a nearby waterway where it is safe for humans, fish and plants. The treatment of sewage generates residual solids that are rich in nutrients. This material is typically applied to farm land as a fertilizer.