DATE: July 16, 2009

TO: District Health Directors
    District Environmental Health Managers
    Onsite Sewage System Professionals
    Professional Engineers

GMP #150

FROM: Daniel Price
      Program Manager

THROUGH: Robert W. Hicks, Director
          Office of Environmental Health Services

SUBJECT: Borate-based Termiticides and Separation to Wells

Background

Section 380 and Table 3.1 of the Private Well Regulations (12 VAC 5-630-10 et seq., the Regulations) establish the standoff distance between wells and sources of contamination. Section 380 A. refers to “pesticide treated soils” as a potential source of contamination. Table 3.1 and Section 380 F require a minimum standoff of 50 feet between a termiticide-treated foundation and Class III and Class IV wells, with exceptions.

Since the Regulations were last amended in 1992, pesticides and their application have continuously evolved using different chemicals and processes. It is our understanding that borate-based termiticides do not pose a threat to groundwater when they are used according to the manufacturer’s instructions as they are not intended for application to soil. GMP #132 describes the use of Bora-Care. BORATHOR MAX PT® is another product that has been brought to our attention recently. The products are mixed with water and applied to the bare surface of wood and other cellulose-containing components to protect them against wood infesting and destroying organism attack. These products penetrate wood where they then crystallize and protect wood from wood destroying organisms. Once a termite, powderpost beetle, old-house borer (or other wood destroying organism) tries to eat wood that has been sprayed with such products, it will die.

Summary Statement

Borate-based termiticides do not constitute treatment of the soils or foundation with a pesticide as cited in the Regulations. Consequently, when borate-based termiticides are applied directly to building components, the separation distance between the foundation and a private well required by §12 VAC 5-630-380.F does not apply.

c: Mr. Ken Kendall, ENSYSTEX, Inc., VP Technical Services & Governmental Affairs
    Virginia Water Well Association