

**Welcome to the
HOME*A*SYST
PROGRAM
for
NEW JERSEY**

Home*A*Syst Program

for New Jersey

Introduction

What is Home*A*Syst?

Home*A*Syst is a confidential, self-assessment program you can use to evaluate your home and property for pollution and health risks. In every home - large or small, new or old, city or country - there are potential pollution sources that can affect the health of your family, your community, or the environment.

Your drinking water, for example, can be affected by many potential contaminant sources: poorly maintained septic or sewage systems, leaky fuel tanks, lead pipes, fertilizers, pesticides, and hazardous household products. Hazards such as lead-based paint exist in older homes, while in newer, tightly sealed homes, indoor air pollution may be a problem. These and other risks can be reduced or eliminated if proper steps are taken. Even simple changes in household practices can prevent pollution and help reduce consumption of water, energy and other resources.

Who should use this book?

This easy-to-use assessment program will be a valuable reference for residents of rural or suburban homes. It is for those who care about their health and the environment and who are willing to take steps - no matter how small - to improve how they manage their homes. Whether you rent a room or own a house, this book can show you how to reduce your impact on natural systems and cut back your use of the earth's resources. Home*A*Syst can also help you protect your investment by identifying pollution risks on your property before expensive problems occur.

What is inside?

The eleven chapters in Home*A*Syst cover essential topics that every resident or homeowner should understand. Each chapter contains key points, along with tables of assessment questions, to help you understand which risks may apply to your situation. For some topics, this guidebook offers all the information you need to minimize or eliminate a pollution risk. For others, it provides a starting point and helps you locate further information and assistance. Keep in mind that laws and regulations can vary by state, county, city or town. Check with local health officials to make sure that your home prac-

tices and changes you plan to make comply with the law.

Getting Started

You can do Home*A*Syst’s assessment exercises one at a time or all together - it’s up to you. The main idea is to take the time to identify any risks to your family’s health or pollution threats to your local environment; then, where feasible, to take voluntary actions to reduce those risks and prevent problems.

This guidebook helps you accomplish three important objectives:

- ✓ **Objective 1:** Identify environmental risks, concerns, or problems in and around your home.
- ✓ **Objective 2:** Learn about better home and property management and find further information.
- ✓ **Objective 3:** Take preventive actions to safeguard your health and the environment.

These objectives are further explained below and illustrated using excerpts from chapter 6, “Lead in and Around The Home: Identifying and Managing its Sources.” This will help you become familiar with how Home*A*Syst works before starting the assessments.

Objective 1: Identify environmental risks.

Do you have pollution or health risks at home? Each Home*A*Syst chapter explains what risks to look for and why you should be concerned about certain conditions around your home. Here is an example from chapter 6 on sources of lead:

- **Does your interior paint contain lead, and what is its condition?**
Lead-based paint (LBP) is the most common source of high lead exposure for children. Most exposure, however, comes from contact with contaminated household dust rather than from eating paint chips. As paint ages or as painted surfaces rub against each other, lead-containing dust is created. If your LBP is perfectly intact, then the potential risk of accidental ingestion is greatly reduced. But if lead paint is cracking, chipping, flaking, or being rubbed by contact, then the danger of lead exposure is much higher.

In each chapter, assessment tables like the sample one below help you determine your potential level of risk.

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT TABLE (from Chapter 6, “Lead In and Around the Home”)

For each question in the table below, indicate your risk level in the right-hand column. Although some choices may not correspond exactly to your situation, choose the response that best fits.

	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Lead-based paint on exterior of house	Intact LBP. Lawn or dense landscape plantings around sides of home.	LBP weathered or chalking. LBP in soil around home, but foot-traffic kept away.	LBP chipping, peeling, chalking. Bare soil or foot-traffic areas below painted walls.	
Major roadways	No major roadway nearby.		Major roadway within 85 feet.	
Lead-related industry	No lead-related industry or incinerators in area.		Lead smelter, battery manufacturer or recycler, or other lead-using industry nearby.	

SAMPLE ACTION CHECKLIST (from Chapter 6, "Lead In and Around the Home")

Write all high and medium risks below.	What can you do to reduce the risk?	Set a target date for action.
<i>Sample:</i> House built in 1935. Paint has not been tested for lead.	Arrange to have paint tested for lead (include samples from window frames, exterior walls, interior walls).	One week from today.

Objective 2: Learn about managing your home and property.

Each chapter describes safe practices and gives recommendations for reducing or eliminating risks. To help you find further information on a topic, each chapter also recommends books, publications, telephone hotlines, and other resources. Here is what chapter 6 says about dealing with lead-based paint:

- **If you find lead...**
Remodeling or renovating in areas having LBP is especially risky. Scraping, sanding, or burning LBP creates extremely hazardous conditions, and strict precautions need to be taken - especially if children, pregnant women, or pets are present. If possible, homeowners should use the services of a certified lead inspector and lead-abatement contractor. Paint removal, replacement of lead-painted parts (such as windows, door jambs, and moldings), liquid encapsulants (special paint-like products

that cover a surface), and removal off-site of leaded surfaces are some of the options for dealing with lead paint. LBP removal by untrained workers who do not use the proper methods and equipment can create a much greater health hazard than just leaving the paint alone.

Objective 3: Take preventive actions.

With Home*A*Syst, nobody is looking over your shoulder to make sure you take preventive or corrective action. It is always your choice. At the end of each chapter is an action checklist where you can write the risks you identified and the actions you plan to take. If you have lead-based paint in your residence, yours might look like the checklist on the following page.

Why Is It Important to Take Action?

Simple identifying risks will not prevent problems. Consider the following reasons for making voluntary improvements, particularly for responding to medium and high risks identified at your home.

To safeguard your health

If you are like most people, you spend a great deal of time in your home. If there are dangers in the air you breathe, in the water you drink, or from hazardous chemicals in your home, they need to be eliminated quickly and effectively. Unfortunately, many people don't know about their potential risks until it is too late and problems have occurred.

To prevent contamination of our water supply and other natural resources

Protecting groundwater and surface water quality is essential to you, your neighbors, and others "downstream." This is important whether your drinking water comes from a private well or from a municipal system. Because everything is connected, what you do and what others do will affect someone else. If we are not good stewards of our water, land, and natural resources, who will be?

To protect your financial investment

Your home is often your most valuable investment. Most states have property disclosure laws that require environmental assess-

ments before owners can sell or transfer their property. Knowing about risks or problems today may help prevent costly cleanups, repairs and legal troubles in the future. And it pays not only to take care of your own property but also to make sure others around you are using good management practices. Property values and tax burdens can be affected by pollution problems on your property as well as in your neighborhood or city. In addition, taking steps to cut your use of energy, water, or other resources can save you money in the long run.

Now It's Up To You.

These Home*A*Syst chapters are not difficult to complete, and doing them can result in important benefits. For example, if you have children at home, working together on the assessments can be a worthwhile educational experience for everyone. And actions you take to eliminate risks may improve your property's resale value. If you value a clean environment and healthy surroundings, then using Home*A*Syst - and making changes - will be a real investment in your family's and your community's future.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension County Offices

Atlantic County

6260 Old Harding Highway
Mays Landing, NJ 08330-1533
Phone: 609/625-0056

Bergen County

327 Ridgewood Avenue
Paramus, NJ 07652-4896
Phone: 201/599-6162

Burlington County

49 Rancocas Rd.
Mount Holly, NJ 08060-1317
Phone: 609/265-5051

Camden County

152 Ohio Avenue
Clementon, NJ 08021-4184
Phone: 609/784-1001

Cape May County

4 Moore Rd.
Cape May Courthouse, NJ 08210-1601
Phone: 609/465-5115

Cumberland County

291 Morton Avenue
Millville, NJ 08332-9776
Phone: 609/451-2800

Essex County

115 Clifton Avenue
Newark, NJ 07104
Phone: 973/268-3552

Gloucester County

County Building, Delsea Drive
Clayton, NJ 08312-1095
Phone: 609/863-0110

Hudson County

114 Clifton Pl.
Murdock Hall, 3rd Floor
Jersey City, NJ 07304-3194
Phone: 201/915-1399

Hunterdon County

4 Gauntt Place
Flemington, NJ 08822-9058
Phone: 908/788-1338

Mercer County

930 Spruce St.
Trenton, NJ 08648-4584
Phone: 609/989-6830

Middlesex County

390 George St., 8th Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-2018
Phone: 732/745-3445

Monmouth County

20 Court St.
Freehold, NJ 07728-1702
Phone: 732/431-7260

Morris County

PO Box 900
Morristown, NJ 07963-0900
Phone: 973/285-8300

Ocean County

1623 Whitesville Road, Extension Center
Toms River, NJ 08755-1199
Phone: 732/349-1247

Passaic County

1310 Route 23 North
Wayne, NJ 07470
973/305-5742

Salem County

51 Cheney Road, Suite #1
Woodstown, NJ 08098-9982
609/769-0090

Somerset County

310 Milltown Road
Bridgewater, NJ 08807-3587
Phone: 908/526-6295

Sussex County

3 High St., 1st Floor
Newton, NJ 07860
973/579-0985

Union County

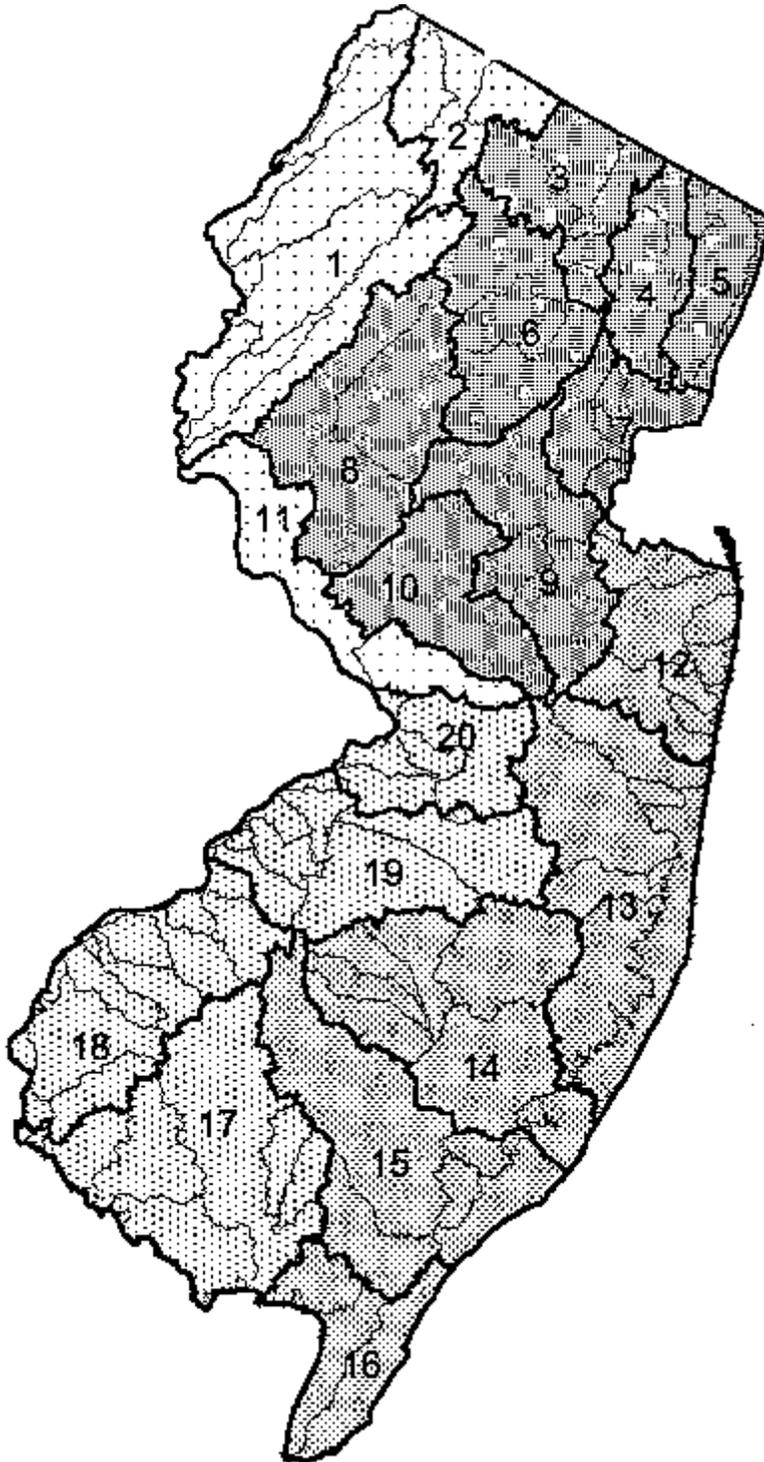
300 North Avenue East
Westfield, NJ 07090-1499
Phone: 908/654-9854

Warren County

Administration Building
165 County Road 519 South
Belvidere, NJ 07823-1949
Phone: 908/475-6505

New Jersey's Watershed Management Areas

Not everyone lives next to a pond or stream, but we all live in a watershed. A watershed is the land area that contributes water to a specific surface water body, such as a pond, lake, river, or bay. The landscape's hills and valleys define the watershed's boundaries. Stormwater can transport pollutants through watersheds to waterways both near and far from your home. Common activities - like how you dispose of used motor oil or fertilizer your lawn and garden - can affect water quality, even when you do these things far from any shore. Use the map below to find your watershed address!



1. Upper Delaware
2. Wallkill, Pochuck, Papakating
3. Pompton, Pequannock, Wanaque, Ramapo
4. Lower Passaic, Saddle
5. Hackensack, Pascack
6. Upper Passaic, Whippany, Rockaway
7. Elizabeth, Rahway, Woodbridge
8. North and South Branch Raritan
9. Lower Raritan, South River, Lawrence Brook
10. Millstone Rivers
11. Central Delaware Tributaries
12. Monmouth Watersheds
13. Barnegat Bay Watersheds
14. Mullica/Wading River Watersheds
15. Great Egg Harbor, Tuckahoe
16. Cape May
17. Maurice River and Cohansey Creek
18. Lower Delaware River Tributaries
19. Rancocas Creek
20. Crosswicks Creek