Glossary

concentration	A ratio showing the amount of contamination per a stated amount of water, soil, or air.
contamination	Chemicals in the air, soil, or water that should not be there.
disproportionate	When a relationship of some kind is out of balance, so when a contaminant has a bigger effect on one group of people than another, the effect is disproportionate.
drift (pesticides)	When pesticides move from where they were first sprayed.
emissions	Toxins that come out of a factory or vehicle into the air.
"grandfathered"	When new rules are passed, sometimes they only apply in the future, so an old business can be "grandfathered in" – meaning it doesn't need to obey the new rules.
hazard, hazardous	Anything harmful to health.
leaching, leachate	Chemicals slowly leaking into the soil, when they were supposed to be contained.
level	The amount of contamination measured in something.
moratorium	Putting a stop to an activity for a period of time.
particles	Very tiny solid things mixed into air or water.
release	In pollution science, this means an accident when hazardous chemicals enter the air, soil, or water
quality	A measure of how clean something is. If water has low contamination, it has high quality.
sample	A small part of something that might tell you about something much larger. If you take a soil sample from a field and find contamination in the sample, you may find contamination in other places in the field, too.
standards	Governments set rules about how much contamination is allowed in air, soil, and water. These may be based on science but are often influenced by politics. For more on how standards are set, see "Water Quality: Read Before You Drink" at <sfa.terc.edu>.
testing	A scientific test is used to measure how much contamination is in something. After testing is done in a lab, they report the test results.
toxic	Means poisonous, it can hurt you. A toxin is something that is toxic.