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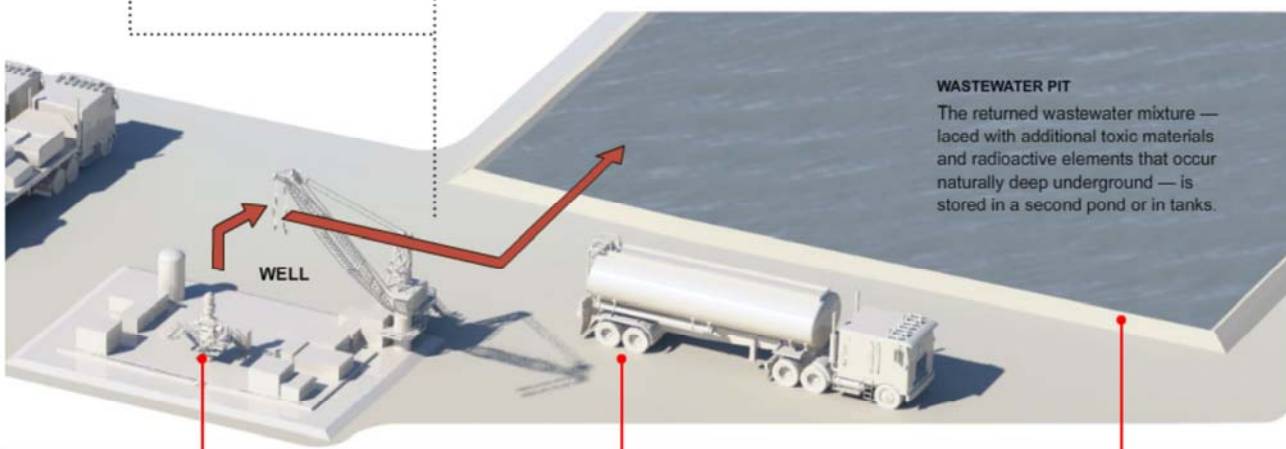
Chemicals and Toxic Materials That Come With Hydrofracking

Waste disposal and other hazards in drilling for natural gas.

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Sand grains stay lodged in fractures, holding them open so gas escapes up the well.

At least 10 percent of the mixture can flow back to the surface in the first weeks; fluids can seep out over decades.



WASTEWATER PIT
The returned wastewater mixture — laced with additional toxic materials and radioactive elements that occur naturally deep underground — is stored in a second pond or in tanks.

... And in Waste Disposal

CONCENTRATED WASTE
Some companies reuse wastewater in wells, but this can lead to even higher levels of toxicity or radioactivity.

DISCHARGES
In Pennsylvania, wastewater has been sent to treatment plants, some of which are not equipped to treat toxic or radioactive content; the water is nonetheless released into rivers. Wastewater also has been used to suppress dust and de-ice roads.

SPILLS
Wastewater pits can leak in many ways. Pond berms, pipes and liners may fail; heavy rain can make pits overflow.

By MIKA GRÖNDAHL, BILL MARSH and GRAHAM ROBERTS | Send Feedback

Source: Dr. Anthony R. Ingraffea, Cornell University; gas industry publications

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