

PFAS Fact Sheet

The District's Commitment to Water Quality

The District's commitment to providing our community with high-quality water is unwavering. We take an immense amount of pride and dedication in providing consumers throughout our District with water that meets or surpasses all federal, state, and local standards. Whenever there is a need for treatment, we invest what is necessary to ensure the quality of our water.

What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") are a group of man-made chemicals that includes PFOA, PFOS, GenX, and many others. PFAS have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries in the United States, and around the globe, since the 1940s. PFOA and PFOS have been the most extensively produced and studied of these chemicals. Both chemicals are very persistent in the environment and in the human body—meaning they don't break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has set a lifetime human health advisory level for PFOA and PFOS in drinking water of 70 parts per trillion (ppt).

How Do PFAS Chemicals Get Into Drinking Water?

Public water providers on Long Island rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply. PFOA and PFOS have been used in the production of a wide range of products, like Teflon, Scotchguard, water-resistant clothing, food packaging, and specialized firefighting foam. PFAS can get into the groundwater as a result of those products decomposing in landfills or washing down the drain, and from manufacturing processes and firefighting activities. Once PFAS reach the groundwater, they persist for many years.

Long Island water providers are taking proactive steps to monitor, and as necessary, remove this compound from water supplies to ensure that drinking water meets all applicable state and federal quality standards.

Are These Chemicals Regulated?

New York's Health Commissioner, Dr. Howard Zucker, accepted the New York State Drinking Water Quality Council's recommendations for maximum contaminant levels in drinking water for PFOA and PFOS, and he has directed the Department to begin the regulatory process for adopting these new enforceable standards. A public comment period ended on September 24th and implementation of the standard could begin in 2020. The recommended levels of 10 parts per trillion for PFOA and 10 parts per trillion for PFOS are the most protective in the nation.

What Actions Are Being Taken to Address PFAS?

While the State is finalizing its process of establishing new drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS, we have taken every precaution necessary to test, monitor and assess all water sampling for those compounds. Like other public water providers on Long Island, we are investing in proactive actions to implement effective wellhead treatment as soon as possible.

Additionally, and along with other water suppliers, the District has filed a lawsuit against those who are responsible for PFAS contamination of our water supplies. The suit is asking the court

to hold those companies accountable for the costs of equipment needed to remove PFAS from our drinking water, as well as for ongoing costs for operations, maintenance, testing and compliance. Our attorneys have filed the necessary motions and paperwork, but no date for a trial has yet been set.

What Sort of Treatment Is Required and When Will It Be Implemented?

There are several specialized treatment methods proven to remove PFAS: granular activated carbon (GAC), reverse osmosis, and anion exchange. Each of these treatment processes is complex, sensitive to the presence of co-occurring contaminants, and requires frequent calibrations and treatment media replacement.

While the State Health Department is still finalizing the standard for PFOA and PFOS, we are undertaking proactive action to position the District to implement effective wellhead treatment as soon as possible. Together with other Long Island water providers, we are already working closely with the Department, as well as engineers and the equipment manufacturers, to ensure that the treatment processes and equipment needed to meet that standard are available and implemented as quickly and safely as possible.

What About Home Water Treatment Devices And Bottled Water?

Regulations for PFAS in bottled water (which are enforced by the FDA) have not been developed. Bottled water manufacturers may have specific information on PFAS levels for their products. At present, there are no home filter systems certified to treat PFAS to below 10 ppt. NSF International certifies filters to reduce PFOA and PFOS in drinking water. NSF is an independent, accredited organization that tests and certifies products and systems to protect and improve human health. To know if a filter is NSF-certified for the removal of PFOA and PFOS look for NSF P473 or NSF Certified to Standard P473 on the product, packaging, or specifications. Two types of filters recommended are granular activated carbon (GAC) and reverse osmosis (RO) filters.

Where Can I Find More Information about PFAS?

- US EPA Technical Fact Sheet PFOS and PFOA (Nov. 2017). https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-12/documents/ffrrofactsheet_contaminants_pfos_pfoa_11-20-17_508_0.pdf
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, *Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and Your Health*, <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas>
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, *Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)*, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/108831.html>

Where Can I Find Information About My Water Quality?

Our tap water continues to be of the highest quality possible and surpasses all local, state and federal testing standards. Consumers can access our annual drinking water quality report from the District's website at: pwwd.org

For additional information, please visit UPSEPA's website at www.epa.gov, or contact us at: info@pwwd.org