

Town of Foxborough PFAS Public Notification

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

The Town of Foxborough per our DEP Sampling Schedule has discovered the presence of PFAS in our water supply. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has asked Foxboro to update their existing public notification with new information regarding PFAS detections.

In May 2016, the EPA issued a lifetime Health Advisory (HA) of 70 parts per trillion (70 ng/L) for the combination of two PFAS chemicals, PFOS and PFOA, in drinking water. In January 2020, MassDEP issued an Office of Research and Standards guideline (OSRG) for drinking water of 20 parts per trillion (20 ng/L) for six PFAS compounds combined. Those Compounds are PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFDA. The OSRG was established to be protection against diverse health affects for all people consuming the water for a lifetime and is also applicable to shorter-term exposures of weeks to months during pregnancy and breast-feeding.

As part of the MssDEP's efforts to address PFAS compounds, in December 2019 MassDEP proposed a PFAS Drinking Water Regulation with a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 20 ng/L or 20 parts per trillion for the same PFAS compounds in the OSRG. The public comment period for the proposed MCL closed on February 28, 2020. Information on the PFAS MCL process, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/development-of-a-pfas-drinking-water-standard-mcl>

In August, 2020, the Water Department sampled at three points where treated water enters the distribution system for the town (entry points). Results varied from 18.8 ppt to 29.1 ppt. The PFAS concentration in Well 12, an active, emergency source, was removed from service on August 31, 2019. The Water Department will evaluate treatment options before returning Well 12 to service. The Witch Pond source is also above the 20ppt and remains in service while our system is currently under an emergency declaration of water supply. We have scheduled a confirmatory sample from this entry point. The Witch Pond source is scheduled to go offline when the new treatment plant comes online before the end of September. The Water Department will continue to monitor the water quality relating to PFAS.

What are PFAS and how are people exposed to them?

PFAS are fluorinated organic chemicals. Two PFAS chemicals, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) have been the most extensively produced and studied of these chemicals. PFAS are contained in firefighting foams, which have been used in training exercises and to extinguish oil and gas fires at a variety of locations including airfields and military installations. PFAS are also used in several industrial processes and have been used to manufacture carpets, clothing, fabrics for furniture, paper packaging for food and other materials (e.g., nonstick cookware) that are resistant to water, grease or stains. Because these chemicals have been used in many consumer products, most people have been exposed to them.

While consumer products and food are the largest source of exposure to these chemicals for most people, drinking water can be an additional source of exposure in communities where these chemicals have contaminated water supplies. Such contamination is typically localized and associated with a

specific facility, for example, an airfield at which they were used for firefighting or a facility where these chemicals were produced or used.

Based on the January 27, 2020 Mass DEP ORSG, MassDEP Recommends that:

- 1) Consumers in sensitive subgroups (pregnant women, nursing mothers, and infants) not consumer, drink or cook with water when the level of the six PFAS substances, individually or in combination, is above 20 parts per trillion.
- 2) Water suppliers take steps expeditiously to lower levels of the six PFAS, individually or in combination, to below 20 parts per trillion for all consumers.

What should you consider doing?

You should consider taking the following steps while action are being implemented to address this issue:

- Sensitive subgroups, including pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants use bottled water for drinking and cooking of foods that absorb water (like pasta).
- Use bottled water to make infant formula or use formula that does not require adding water.
- For older children and adults, the 20 parts per trillion value is application to a lifetime of consuming water. For these groups, shorter duration exposures present less risk. However, if you are concerned with your exposure while steps are being taken to assess and lower the PFAS concentrations in the drinking water, use of bottled water will reduce your exposure.
- Water contaminated with PFAS can be treated by home water treatment systems that are certified to remove PFAS by an independent testing group such as NSF, UL, Water Quality Association, or the CSA Group. These may include point of entry treatment systems, which treat all the water entering the home, or point of use devices, which treat water where it is used, such as at a faucet.
- In most situations the water can be used for washing foods, brushing teeth, bathing and showering. If you have cuts or broken skin, you may want to avoid long showers or baths. If you are concerned about your exposure, even though the risk is very low, you may want to use bottled water for brushing teeth and cleaning items like dentures, pacifiers, and fruits and vegetables.
- Note: boiling the water will not destroy these chemicals and will somewhat increase their level due to evaporation of some of the water.
- If you have specific health concerns regarding your exposure, you should consult a health professional, such as your doctor.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, please contact Robert Worthley at 508-543-1209 or by mail at Foxborough Water Department, 70 Elm Street, Foxborough, MA 02035.

You can also get more information on PFAS from the following sources:

- MassDEP Fact Sheet – PFAS in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers for Consumers: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/04/17/pfas-in-dw-fs.pdf>
- USEPA’s Drinking Water Health Advisories can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Public Health Statement for PFOS and PFOA can be found at: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/>
- [The AWWA Briefing on PFAS](#)

For additional information on possible health effects, you may contact the Massachusetts Department Environmental Protection, Office of Research and Standards, at 617-556-1165.

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