

PFAS IN YOUR MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEM?

A Quick Guide For Wisconsin Communities



THE PROBLEM WITH PFAS

PFAS are a class of thousands of chemicals made to resist water, stains, and grease.

PFAS chemicals are used in a number of products like firefighting foam, nonstick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain resistant carpets, cosmetics and much more.



PFAS are toxic to humans and wildlife

PFAS do not break down in the environment and exposure to PFAS is extremely harmful to our health.

PFAS has been detected in our drinking water



Because of their widespread use, PFAS has been found in the drinking water of a growing number of Wisconsin communities. See DNR's drinking water system portal to check the results of your water utility at dnr.wi.gov/dwsviewer.

The Wisconsin drinking water quality standards aren't protective enough

Water utilities are only required to reduce PFOA and PFOS chemicals in your water if levels are detected above the current drinking water quality standard, 70 ppt - a level not considered adequate to protect the community's health.

Even though the level to take action should be much lower, having a drinking water quality standard is a good start because it imposes testing requirements to public water utilities. The Wisconsin DNR will obtain sampling results not only for PFOA and PFOS, but other 16 PFAS as well.

Adequate public notification is a powerful force for prevention

Adequate notification levels are needed to minimize exposure and keep the public safe. Drinking water utilities are only required to notify the public if levels exceed the Wisconsin DHS recommendations - which are significantly higher than the EPA's 2022 Health Advisories Levels for four PFAS.



The Wisconsin DNR only recommends notification when PFAS detection exceeds the EPA's levels. Other states have much lower required notification levels. **Wisconsin regulatory agencies can do better.**

HOW TO TAKE ACTION: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF NOTIFIED?

CONTACT YOUR UTILITY DIRECTOR AT YOUR LOCAL WATER UTILITY

Demand that the public water utility take these actions:

- ✓ Test for additional PFAS
- ✓ Issue a drinking water advisory
- ✓ Provide public notice to everyone in the water service area
- ✓ Take short-term steps (provide bottled water, in-home filters)
- ✓ Take long-term steps (installing treatment devices at the water system)
- ✓ Provide opportunity for public feedback

CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS IN YOUR CITY OR TOWN

These may include your city councilperson, township supervisor, county commissioner, state representative, or state senator

- ✓ Have a clear ask of what you need
- ✓ Provide resources or information
- ✓ Stay focused and avoid political statements
- ✓ Elected officials may redirect you to the water utility. Don't give up because they have the power to order your water utility to test.

CONTACT THE WI DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Contact the Bureau Director and Field Operations Director for Drinking Water and Groundwater Program. Ask the state to:

- ✓ Issue public notification based on the latest science. For PFOA and PFOS the public should be notified at any level detected.
- ✓ Use federal funds that will help pay for PFAS cleanup
- ✓ Require all water utilities to conduct comprehensive PFAS testing

JOIN A COMMUNITY GROUP

- ✓ Ask your neighbors what information they know
- ✓ Organize a meeting with your neighbors to share information and ask questions
- ✓ Divide up tasks and roles - have everyone report back to the group
- ✓ Find other communities impacted by PFAS

RESOURCES

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Wisconsin PFAS Action Plan
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources PFAS Page
Wisconsin Department of Health Services PFAS Page

US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

EPA Strategic Roadmap
EPA - PFAS Page

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Wisconsin Green Muslims
#PFASFree Wisconsin
Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
Midwest Environmental Advocates
S.O.H2O
Great Lakes PFAS Action Network

QUESTIONS?

Go to:
glpan.org
midwestadvocates.org

Contact:
connect@glpan.org
jromanromero@midwestadvocates.org