

City of Woburn, Massachusetts

**Important Information for all Consumers Receiving Drinking Water from Our System
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)**

-- Please translate it or speak with someone who understands it --

Important Notice: This notice provides information regarding your drinking water and contaminants known as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). This notice provides information about the City of Woburn’s ongoing monitoring for PFAS in drinking water and proactive steps to ensure the safety of our water supply.

What PFAS Levels Have Been Detected in Your Drinking Water?

Because we understand the emerging concerns about PFAS in the environment, including drinking water, the City of Woburn began voluntarily monitoring the water at the Water Treatment Plant for PFAS in October 2019. The results ranged from 10.9 to 20.2 parts per trillion, with an average of 15.1 parts per trillion. In April 2021, the City continued monitoring the treated water under a new Massachusetts drinking water regulation for the following six PFAS compounds: PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid), PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid), PFNA (perfluorononanoic acid), PFHxS (perfluorohexanesulfonic acid), PFHpA (perfluoroheptanoic acid) and PFDA (perfluorodecanoic acid). MassDEP abbreviates this set of six PFAS as “PFAS6.” A summary of the PFAS6 monitoring results under the new MassDEP regulations is provided below:

	Water Treatment Plant				MassDEP Regulations	
	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	Quarterly Average	Standard (MCL) for Quarterly Average	In Compliance?
PFAS6 (parts per trillion, or ppt)*	12.1	12.4	23.8	16	20	Yes

**For reference, a “part per trillion” is a microscopic measurement for something in the water and would be equal to a few grains of sugar in an Olympic size swimming pool.*

The April-June 2021 quarterly average of 16 ppt is below the new MassDEP drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 20 ppt, with compliance based on the quarterly average of monthly samples. More information on these guidelines and regulations is provided below.

The City of Woburn is following MassDEP’s communications guidance to inform the public about the status of their drinking water and efforts we are taking to ensure the safety of our water supply.

What Is Our Water System Doing?

The City of Woburn is committed to the following actions to provide our customers with quality drinking water:

- Continue to routinely sample our treated water and our individual source wells for PFAS6.
- Investigate potential options for removal of PFAS6 so that we can be ready should we need to implement additional treatment of our water.
- Provide regular updates on the levels detected in our water supply.

What are PFAS and How are People Exposed to Them?

PFAS are fluorinated organic chemicals. Two PFAS compounds, PFOA and PFOS have been the most extensively produced and studied of these compounds. 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 consumer products that are resistant to water, grease, or stains. Many PFAS compounds were used in common consumer products such as stain repellants, nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing, water-resistant food wrappers and containers, and many others. Most uses of PFAS compounds were phased out 10 to 15 years ago and replaced with other compounds that are thought to pose fewer health risks. However, because PFAS were 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 where they were used for firefighting or a facility where PFAS were produced or used. However, as is the situation in Woburn, very low levels of human-made PFAS compounds are also found in drinking water supplies without a known source of contamination, as PFAS degrade very slowly and are commonly found in groundwater and soils.

What are the Health Advisory and Regulatory Levels for PFAS?

In 2016, the EPA published a lifetime Health Advisory (HA) of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for the combination of two PFAS compounds – PFOS and PFOA – in drinking water. In 2021, EPA has taken action to collect new data needed to improve understanding of PFAS and to begin to develop a national primary drinking water regulation for PFAS.

In December 2019, MassDEP amended Massachusetts hazardous waste cleanup regulations (the Massachusetts Contingency Plan or “MCP”) to add Reportable Concentrations and cleanup standards for soil and groundwater to address sites contaminated with PFAS. The new standard for groundwater that is currently used (or could be used) for drinking water is 20 ppt for 6 PFAS compounds, which is consistent with the new drinking water regulatory limit described below.

In October 2020, MassDEP finalized a drinking water standard for public water systems, known as a Maximum Contaminant Level, for PFAS6. A Maximum Contaminant Level or MCL means the maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water which is delivered to any user of a public water system. Information on this effort, including information on stakeholder meetings, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/development-of-a-pfas-drinking-water-standard-mcl>. The MCL is 20 ppt individually or for the sum of the concentrations of six specific PFAS compounds (PFOS, PFOA, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFDA) in drinking water. Some people who drink water containing PFAS in excess of the MCL may experience certain adverse effects. These could include effects on the liver, blood, immune system, thyroid, and fetal development. These PFAS may also elevate the risk of certain cancers. MassDEP and the CDC both note more research is needed and ongoing, and it is important to remember consuming water with PFAS6 does not mean adverse effects will occur.

If You Have Additional Concerns, What Can You Do?

There is still much that we do not know about PFAS and its impact on human health. As of now, the MassDEP recommends that consumers in sensitive subgroups avoid consuming water with PFAS6 above 20 ppt. If you are a sensitive consumer (pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants or people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system)) you can minimize your exposure by using bottled water that has been tested for PFAS for drinking, making infant formula, and cooking foods that absorb water (like pasta). Alternatively, you can use a home water treatment system that is certified to remove PFAS by an independent testing group such as NSF International, Underwriters Laboratories, Water Quality Association, or the CSA Group. See the MassDEP PFAS webpage for more information at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

- Boiling water will not destroy PFAS and will somewhat increase their levels due to evaporation of some of the water.
- As PFAS compounds are not well absorbed through the skin, you may safely use the water for bathing and showering. If you are concerned about your exposure, even though the risk is very low, you may want to use bottled water for brushing your teeth and cleaning items like dentures, pacifiers, and fruits and vegetables.
- If you have specific health concerns regarding your exposure, you may want to consult a health professional, such as your doctor.

Where Can You Get More Information?

For more information on the City of Woburn's proactive approach, please contact Anthony Blazejowski 5 Cove St Woburn, Ma 01801 781-897-5945 or email: ablazejowski@cityofwoburn.com

You may also find more information on PFAS from the following sources:

- MassDEP Fact Sheet – PFAS in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers for Consumers <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-fact-sheet-pfas-in-drinking-water-questions-and-answers-for-consumers/download>
- 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 (CDC) and Prevention's Public Health Statement for PFOS and PFOA can be found at: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>
- For additional information on possible health effects, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Research and Standards, at 617-556-1165.

This notice is being sent to you by:

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Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.