

2025

WISCONSIN RESOURCE GUIDE

PFAS

IN YOUR WATER

WHAT ARE PFAS?

Pressing PFAS Questions
Asked and Answered

HOW TO TAKE ACTION

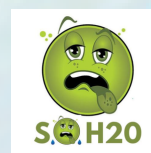
Join the movement to rid
our communities of PFAS

HELPFUL LINKS

Know who to contact for
PFAS testing, treatment,
and more



**NATIONAL
WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**



PFAS FAQs

What are PFAS?

A class of thousands of substances—toxic chemicals—that have been found in the drinking water of a growing number of Wisconsin communities. They are used to make products water & stain-resistant.

Why are PFAS a problem?

Even at very low levels, exposure to PFAS has been linked to cancer and other serious health problems, such as reproductive issues, developmental delays, thyroid hormone disruption, high cholesterol, immune deficiencies, and more.

What does “PFAS” stand for?

Per and Polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS (pronounced “PEA-FASS”)

How do PFAS get into drinking water?

PFAS can get into drinking water when products or industrial waste containing them are disposed of, used, or spilled onto the ground or into lakes and rivers. PFAS move easily through the ground and can get into groundwater that is used for water supplies or drinking water wells.



Where are PFAS found?



Nonstick cookware



Water-repellant clothing



Stain resistant carpet & cleaning products



Cosmetics



Firefighting foam

PFAS IN WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) primarily regulates municipal drinking water for WI residents.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS:

These include municipality owned and operated water utilities and some private systems like daycares and mobile home parks.

MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVELS (MCLS)

Enforceable regulations of the highest level of PFAS allowed in drinking water

Federal Regulations:

In 2024, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the **maximum contaminant levels** for six different PFAS chemicals, requiring public water systems to monitor for these chemicals and to notify the public and reduce PFAS contamination if levels exceed the standards.

ISSUING DRINKING WATER ADVISORIES

The public has a right to know what is in their drinking water.

Wisconsin public systems are required to provide public notice to their customers when an exceedance above a drinking water health advisory or a MCL is found. Drinking water advisories should be issued as soon as possible, and no later than 30 days after an exceedance is discovered. The public water systems should take responsive steps.

Responsive steps: provide bottled water and in-home filter devices, installing treatment devices at the water system to reduce or remove PFAS. Allow the public ample time opportunity to provide feedback about their responsive steps.

PFAS Regulations in Wisconsin:

- The DNR maintains a drinking water program that is at least as stringent as the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Wisconsin does not regulate private wells that do not meet the definition of a **public water system**.

Safe Drinking Water Standards:

Wisconsin set a maximum contaminant level for two PFAS chemicals (PFOA and PFOS). While the Wisconsin Department of Health Services recommended the standards be set to 20 parts-per-trillion (ppt), the DNR set the standard at 70 ppt.

All public water systems in Wisconsin are required to test for PFOA and PFOS.

IF THE EPA FINALIZES ITS PROPOSED RULE TO ESTABLISH MCLS FOR SIX PFAS,

the Wisconsin DNR will have up to three years to implement these much lower standards in its safe drinking water program.

WHAT ABOUT WELLS?

NEARLY ONE-THIRD OF WISCONSINITES RELY ON PRIVATE WELLS FOR DRINKING WATER.

>>> NOT ALL WELLS ARE REGULATED

The federal government does NOT regulate groundwater or drinking water in private wells that do not qualify as public water systems.

The WI DNR does regulate some contaminants in groundwater. **However, PFAS is not regulated in groundwater.**

>>> WISCONSIN NEEDS ENFORCEABLE GROUNDWATER STANDARDS

Residents who use private wells are largely left without needed regulatory support from the DNR.

ATTEMPTS TO REGULATE

In 2019, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services recommended groundwater enforcement standards of 20 ppt for POFA and PFOS plus additional standards for 16 other PFAS.

While the DNR attempted to enforce those standards, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board failed to advance that effort

TAKE ACTION

YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAND FOR TOXIC CHEMICALS IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

>>> COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Organizing in your community can be as simple as talking to your neighbors. It can be more involved, too, like holding rallies, petition drives, meeting with lawmakers, or engaging the local news. If you have been told that PFAS has contaminated your drinking water, groundwater, lakes, or other water bodies, consider starting by asking your neighbors what information they know and contacting your local officials.

>>> TIPS FOR ORGANIZING:

- Meet your neighbors
- Start a community group and define your purpose
- Find out who is missing at the table
- Find allies and partners

RESOURCES

The information can be overwhelming at first! Let this guide help you. From testing kits to state and federal resources, you can learn more about PFAS with these resources.

AT-HOME PFAS TEST KITS:

Testing PFAS in drinking water and water bodies:

<https://cyclopure.com/product/water-test-kit-pro>

Testing PFAS levels in human bodies:

<https://empowerdxc.com/products/product/pfas-16-test-legacy-compounds>

STATE OF WISCONSIN:

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES PFAS PAGE

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS>

PFAS testing and sampling results:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS/DataViewer>

Testing PFAS in Labs:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS/Labs.html>

You can send PFAS samples to a lab for testing. Labs that the Dept. of Natural Resources has granted PFAS certification in the state of Wisconsin are listed:

Wisconsin PFAS Action Plan:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS/ActionPlan.html>

WI Department of Health Services PFAS:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/pfas.htm>

WISCONSIN ELECTED OFFICIALS

Find your state legislators:

<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/>

FEDERAL

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) PFAS

<https://www.epa.gov/pfas>

Strategic Roadmap

<https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-strategic-roadmap-epas-commitments-action-2021-2024>

ORGANIZATIONS

Ready to get involved or want to learn even more? These groups have been hard at work fighting toxic PFAS chemicals for years. Feel free to reach out or peruse their websites for more information.

WISCONSIN GREEN MUSLIMS:

<https://wisconsinmgreenmuslims.org/water/>

GREAT LAKES PFAS ACTION NETWORK:

www.glpn.org

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION,

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CENTER:

<https://www.nwf.org/Great-Lakes/Our-Work/PFAS>

MIDWEST ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES:

<https://midwestadvocates.org/issues-actions/issues/detail/pfas>

#PFASFREE WISCONSIN:

<https://www.pfasfree.org/>

SAVE OUR WATERS (S.O.H2O):

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070015533766>

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION VOTERS:

<https://conservationvoters.org/priority-campaigns/pfas-in-our-water>

CITIZENS FOR SAFE WATER AROUND BADGER:

<https://cswab.org/pfas/about-the-pfas-campaign/>

CLEAN WISCONSIN:

<https://www.cleanwisconsin.org/our-work/water/pfas/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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