

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 10, 2024.

What are PFAS?

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large and diverse group of chemicals used in many commercial applications due to their unique properties, such as resistance to high and low temperatures, resistance to degradation, and nonstick characteristics. Although PFAS have been manufactured and used broadly in commerce since the 1940s, concern over potential adverse effects on human health grew in the early 2000s with the detection of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in human blood. Since that time, hundreds of different PFAS have been found in water, soil, and air. Many PFAS, including PFOA and PFOS, are environmentally persistent, bioaccumulative, and remain in human bodies for a long time. Most uses of PFOA and PFOS were voluntarily phased out by U.S. manufacturers in the mid-2000s, although there are a limited number of ongoing uses, and these chemicals remain in the environment due to their persistence and lack of degradation. In addition, some newer PFAS in use break down into PFOA and PFOS.

EPA PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation

On April 10, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally announced its final National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for six PFAS, including perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA, also known as Gen-X), perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS).

The NPDWR establishes legally enforceable limits, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water. PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, and HFPO-DA (Gen-X) will be regulated as individual contaminants. PFHxS, PFNA, PFBS, and HFPO DA will also be regulated as a PFAS mixture. The NPDWR also establishes health-based, non-enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) for these six PFAS.

Compound	MCLG (health based goal)	MCL (enforceable levels)
PFOA	Zero	4.0 parts per trillion (ppt) (also expressed as ng/L)

PFOS	Zero	4.0 ppt
PFHxS	10.0 ppt	10.0 ppt
PFNA	10.0 ppt	10.0 ppt

HFPO-DA (commonly known as Gen-X Chemicals)	10.0 ppt	10.0 ppt
Mixtures containing two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS	1.0 (unitless) Hazard Index	1.0 (unitless) Hazard Index

An MCL is an enforceable water quality standard that protects public health by setting the maximum level that a contaminant may be present in drinking water delivered to users of a public water system. An MCLG, although not enforceable, is the maximum level of a contaminant in drinking water where there is no known or anticipated negative effect on an individual's health, allowing for a margin of safety.

Is PFAS in Colbert County's Water?

Colbert County Rural Water (CCRW) samples drinking water for PFAS on a quarterly basis, as required by ADEM and the EPA. The results of this sampling are reported to ADEM. CCRW's most current test results for the PFAS chemicals referenced in the EPA health advisory and the new NPDWR are as follows:

PFAS	2016 HA	2022 HA	MCL	MCLG	YOUR WATER
PFOA	70 ppt	.004 ppt	4.0 ppt	Zero	8.2 ppt
PFOS	70 ppt	.02 ppt	4.0 ppt	Zero	12.0 ppt
PFNA	N/A	N/A	10.0 ppt	10.0 ppt	ND
PFHxS	N/A	N/A	10.0 ppt	10.0 ppt	ND

HFPO-D A (GEN-X)	N/A	10 ppt	10.0 ppt	10.0 ppt	ND
PFBS	N/A	2000 ppt			3.4 ppt

What is CCRW doing about PFAS?

As required by ADEM, CCRW has been monitoring for PFAS and notifying the public of the levels of these PFAS. CCRW is also taking additional steps to evaluate how best to remove these PFAS from CCRW’s drinking water.

As part of this ongoing effort, CCRW has recently approved measures that will allow CCRW to share information with respect to PFAS treatment technologies with other water utilities facing similar PFAS contamination issues. On April 9, 2024, the Colbert County Commission voted to approve a resolution to allow CCRW to obtain PFAS pilot study data generated as part of Muscle Shoals Utilities Board’s PFAS treatment pilot program that is currently underway. We are currently evaluating whether Granular Activated Carbon can effectively be added into our existing filtration system as a temporary measure to reduce PFAS from our drinking water.

In addition, CCRW has taken legal action in the Circuit Court of Colbert County Alabama against chemical manufacturers and others responsible for causing the PFAS contamination in CCRW’s drinking water supply. While CCRW cannot comment on the ongoing litigation, the lawsuit was brought in order to ensure that those responsible for causing the PFAS contamination bear the financial responsibility for CCRW’s increased compliance and testing costs and expenses, increased engineering costs and expenses, increased operational expenses, and the expense of removing PFAS from the drinking water. Our lawsuit was filed in August of 2022 and is actively moving forward, with depositions currently underway.

Where Can I Learn More About PFAS and EPA’s New Regulation?

For more information about how EPA is regulating PFAS in drinking water, please click [here](#).