

Town of Wilmington – Information Regarding PFAS in Drinking Water

Dear Customers:

Beginning in April 2021, the Town of Wilmington Water Division began testing drinking water for a family of chemical compounds known as pre- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) that have been detected in some public water supplies in Massachusetts and across the nation. Recently, the MassDEP issued a new drinking water standard for the sum of six PFAS compounds (PFAS6). The sum of PFAS6 may not exceed 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L), also equal to 20 parts per trillion (ppt).

What are PFAS?

PFAS are a family of thousands of manmade chemicals used for non-stick coatings, stain resistance in clothing and carpeting, and firefighting foams as well as many other uses. Manufacturing of certain PFAS was discontinued in the U.S. about 30 years ago, but they may still be used in imported products. PFAS are resilient and do not degrade easily in soil and water, they are known as “forever chemicals”. As a result, they are widely found in the environment and many consumer products where they migrate to the food supply and drinking water.

What happened?

Results received the week of October 18, 2021, show that a water sample taken from the Sargent Water Treatment Plant had a result of 20.6 nanograms per liter (ng/l), exceeding the PFAS6 Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) drinking water standard of 20.0 nanograms per liter (ng/l).

Please note that follow up samples were taken on October 21, and November 1, 2021, and results showed the levels of PFAS6 back below 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L). Please see the table below:

PFAS6 Results for Sargent Water Treatment Plant		
Monitoring Period	Sample Collection Date	PFAS6 Result (ng/L)
October 2021	10/6/2021	20.6
October 2021	10/21/2021	16.5
November 2021	11/1/2021	No Detection of PFAS

What did the Town do?

The Town of Wilmington took the following actions to address the situation:

- Decreased the amount of water being distributed to the public from the Sargent WTP by shutting off 1 of the 3 wells sending water to this plant, the one with the highest PFAS levels. This decreased the load on the carbon bed in the filters, which reduced PFAS.
- Took another sample after shutting off 1 well and the result was **16.5 (ng/L)**, back below 20 nanograms per liter (ng/l) standard.
- Increased the amount of water being taken from the MWRA, which has **no** PFAS6 detections. This made up for the water loss from the deactivated well.
- Completed an expedited replacement of the Granular Activated Carbon (GAC), a primary treatment method for PFAS removal, at the Sargent Water Treatment Plant. The Sargent WTP was offline for approximately 2 weeks while the GAC was replaced and other maintenance was being completed.
- Took another water sample on November 1 after the new GAC was installed and the results showed there were **no detections of PFAS** found in the drinking water at the Sargent Water Treatment Plant.
- Created Town of Wilmington PFAS Website Information Page (See link below). This page will be updated with future results and other relevant information.

Is there a health impact?

MassDEP states that “consuming water with PFAS6 above the drinking water standard does not mean that adverse effects will occur. The degree of risk depends on the level of the chemicals and the duration of exposure.” As a precautionary measure, however, MassDEP recommends consumers in a sensitive subgroup (pregnant or nursing women, infants and people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system), not consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ppt.

When in doubt or if one has concerns about health, please speak with your health care provider to obtain the proper information for your situation.

Where can I get more information?

Town of Wilmington PFAS Information

<https://www.wilmingtonma.gov/water-sewer-division/pages/pfas-wilmington>

www.safewatermass.org

MassDEP Fact Sheet - Questions and Answers for Consumers

<https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351>

Massachusetts Department of Public Health information about PFAS in Drinking Water

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-drinking-water>

For more information regarding PFAS in Wilmington’s drinking water, please contact Department of Public Works Utility Manager Joseph Lobao at 978-658-4711.