

Fairfax Water’s Statement on EPA’s Final PFAS Standards for Drinking Water

Fairfax Water remains focused on our mission of providing our customers with water of exceptional quality and emphasizes the importance of removing PFAS at the source before it reaches drinking water supplies.

To learn more about Fairfax Water’s PFAS monitoring, please visit <https://www.fairfaxwater.org/water-quality/facts-about-pfas>.

Fairfax, Virginia – April 10, 2024 – Today, the EPA announced final national primary drinking water standards for six types of poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), including proposed Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA or GenX chemicals), perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). The standard also establishes a hazard index (HI) for a mixture of two or more of the following: PFNA, PFHxS, HFPO-DA, and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS).

According to the EPA, public water systems have five years (by 2029) to implement solutions that reduce these PFAS if monitoring shows that drinking water levels exceed these MCLs. Fairfax Water will ensure that our water meets these standards.

“Fairfax Water is committed to providing our customers with water of exceptional quality,” said Phil Allin, Chairman of the Fairfax Water Board. “We will continue to champion source water protection and support local, state, and national efforts to prevent these compounds from entering the Occoquan Reservoir and Potomac River.”

Water utilities are passive receivers of PFAS compounds, which are used in firefighting foam, industrial processes, and consumer products. Most humans are exposed to PFAS through food and consumer products while drinking water makes up a small portion of their total exposure. Peer-reviewed studies show that exposure to elevated levels of PFAS may lead to adverse health outcomes in humans.

Due to decades of use, PFAS are everywhere in the environment. Industrial sites might release PFAS into the water or air. Consumer and household products containing PFAS enter landfills and are washed down the drain. Because of their chemical composition, PFAS do not break

down naturally and can be found throughout the environment in surface water, groundwater, air, and soil. They build up in the environment over time, eventually entering our bodies through food and drinking water.

“Drinking water is vital to public health,” stated Fairfax Water General Manager Jamie Hedges. “We are working to identify sources of PFAS in the Occoquan and Potomac watersheds to stop PFAS from reaching drinking water supplies. Removing PFAS at the source is the key to ensuring the community has high-quality water at affordable rates.”

Fairfax Water's website has information on PFAS and PFAS sampling results:

<https://www.fairfaxwater.org/water-quality/facts-about-pfas>. Our data shows that the PFNA, HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX chemicals), PFHxS, and PFBS levels in our water are all below the MCLs and HI. PFOA and PFOS results for Potomac treated water are less than the MCL of 4.0 parts per trillion (ppt). PFOA and PFOS results for the Griffith Water Treatment Plant, which treats water from the Occoquan Reservoir, are slightly above the proposed MCL of 4.0 ppt. Fairfax Water is evaluating treatment processes to ensure that our water will meet these standards.

Additional Information:

- For more information about EPA’s PFAS standards: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>
- To learn more about Fairfax Water’s PFAS monitoring: <https://www.fairfaxwater.org/water-quality/facts-about-pfas>

About Fairfax Water: *Fairfax Water is Virginia’s largest drinking water utility, serving one out of every four Virginians. Over two million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax County, Loudoun County, Prince William County, Herndon, Vienna, Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax City, Fort Belvoir, and Dulles International Airport depend on Fairfax Water for reliable drinking water.*