

DO YOU KNOW? THE FACTS.

UNDERSTANDING PFOA / PFOS

WHAT ARE PFOA AND PFOS?

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) are chemicals that are resistant to heat, water and oil and have been used for decades in hundreds of consumer products and industrial applications. As a result, these chemicals are often found in the environment.

Although PFOA and PFOS are no longer manufactured in the United States, many products that contain the chemicals still exist, such as cosmetics, food packaging, clothing and furniture fabrics. In addition, other countries still make products containing these chemicals, which may be imported into the United States.

PFOA and PFOS have been monitored by water agencies and reported based on past United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) regulations. Unregulated contaminant monitoring helps the USEPA as well as the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Board) Division of Drinking Water (DDW) determine whether the contaminants need to be regulated.

WHAT ARE WAYS PEOPLE ARE EXPOSED TO PFOA AND PFOS?

Most people have been exposed to these chemicals through consumer products such as cosmetics, food packaging, clothing, furniture fabrics and materials that are resistant to water, grease and stains. These chemicals have been found in the environment as well as detected in the food supply.

Due to the prolonged use of PFOA and PFOS in many common consumer products, the chemicals have been known to seep into the groundwater supply beneath landfills and fire-fighting training facilities.

COMMON PRODUCTS



It's important to note that while the USEPA is responsible for the safety of drinking water, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates bottled drinking water. USEPA standards are more stringent than the FDA regarding the regulation of public drinking water systems.

YOUR DRINKING WATER IS SAFE!

EMWD is committed to providing a safe, high quality and reliable water supply while protecting public health.



ARE THERE PFOA AND PFOS IN EMWD'S GROUNDWATER?

EMWD relies on well water for approximately 10 percent of its service area water supply. To date, EMWD has identified two wells, adjacent to March Air Reserve Base, containing PFOA and/or PFOS above current notification levels. EMWD responded immediately by taking the wells out of service until remediation can occur.

WHAT IS BEING DONE ABOUT PFOA AND PFOS IN THE ENVIRONMENT?

In 2009, the USEPA published provisional health advisories for PFOA and PFOS. In May 2016, as science and technology advanced, the USEPA replaced provisional health advisories with a new healthy advisory for lifetime exposure, for the most sensitive populations, of a combined 70 parts per trillion (ppt)*. Based on preliminary information from the USEPA, 63 water suppliers in the United States detected PFOA and PFOS in their drinking water supplies, with 26 of those water systems located in California. Today, the USEPA is moving forward with establishing an enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level process for PFOA and PFOS.

WHAT IS EMWD DOING ABOUT PFOA AND PFOS?

Each year, EMWD performs more than 50,000 tests on more than 8,000 water samples to monitor and ensure quality. This testing includes sampling for PFOA and PFOS. Testing results are provided to the USEPA and the State Board DDW, and are reported in EMWD's annual Consumer Confidence Report.

EMWD will continue to be proactive in testing all of its wells to monitor the extent of any compounds that may be found in the groundwater basin.

NOTIFICATION AND RESPONSE LEVELS

State Regulation	PFAS Compound	Previous	New**
Notification Level	PFOA	14 ppt	5.1 ppt
Notification Level	PFOS	13 ppt	6.5 ppt
Response Level	PFOA	70 ppt combined	10 ppt**
Response Level	PFOS		40 ppt**

* One part-per-trillion (ppt) is equivalent to 1 second in nearly 32, 000 years.

** The State Board DDW announced on August 23, 2019 the new Notification Levels for PFOA and PFOS. The proposed lower Response Levels were announced in February 2020.

RESOURCES

EMWD's Water Quality
www.emwd.org/WaterQuality

United States Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/pfas

Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov/food/chemicals/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas

State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water
www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/PFOA_PFOS

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