PFAS

TOP 10 FACTS FOR GROUNDWATER USERS

NGWA
Focused on the Future

1. PFAS refer to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a class of human-made chemicals used in firefighting, stain resistance, water repellents, and many other commercial and industrial applications since the 1940s.

2. Thousands of PFAS compounds are known to exist. Some are considered to be widespread in the environment, at least at low concentrations.

3. Some PFAS, known as perfluoroalkyl acids (PFAAs) are persistent in the environment; other PFAS, known as precursors, may degrade to these persistent PFAS in the environment.

4. EPA has proposed drinking water standards (MCLs) for PFOA and PFOS and potentially four other PFAS.

5. As of January 2026, approximately 8% of public water systems have detected one or more of the six PFAS at concentrations greater than proposed MCLs according to sampling conducted under the EPA Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 5 (UCMR 5).

6. Public water systems have until 2029 to implement solutions that reduce regulated PFAS to levels less than MCLs.

7. Exposure to PFAS-impacted water can occur by ingestion, inhalation, and dermal exposure. At this point in time, ingestion is considered the most significant route among these three.

8. Two PFAS, PFOS and PFOA, have been designated hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as 'Superfund.'

9. NGWA encourages routine water testing for a range of contaminants in private wells and well systems. If PFAS is detected in your area, testing for those contaminants should also be considered. See Fact Sheet: "PFAS and Private Well Owners: What You Need to Know."

10. EPA published a Strategic PFAS Roadmap in October 2021 to address PFAS across all program offices, leveraging the full range of statutory authorities granted to them. Implementation of the plan is ongoing. Progress against the plan can be found on EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap webpage.