



ILLINOIS EPA *Impact*

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Message from DIRECTOR JAMES JENNINGS



The U.S. EPA recently announced actions to roll back protective national drinking water standards for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in community water supplies (CWS). In response, I issued the following statement:

"Illinois EPA has been working to address PFAS contamination in Illinois community water supplies since 2020. These efforts have included comprehensive water sampling and advocating for protective, scientifically sound, drinking water standards. Thankfully, our proactive efforts have led to the adoption of amendments to Illinois groundwater and drinking water regulations that safeguard Illinois communities. Regardless of the federal government's actions, our commitment to address PFAS pollution and protect our drinking water resources remains."

For background, the U.S. EPA initially established a federal Health Advisory for PFAS in 2016 but took no action to establish Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), federal drinking water standards, until 2024. As a result, in 2020, Illinois EPA announced plans to conduct a statewide investigation into the prevalence and occurrence of PFAS in all CWS in Illinois. Data collected by the investigation was to be used in the development of state specific MCL standards for PFAS. Additionally, in 2021, the Illinois EPA filed proposed amendments of the Illinois Pollution Control Board's (Board) Part 620 groundwater quality regulations to preserve and protect Illinois groundwater and to ensure that the state's groundwater quality standards match current scientific data and methodologies. The Illinois EPA's proposal included new groundwater quality standards for six PFAS based on the most recent scientific information available. In 2025, the Board's amendments to Part 620 were adopted.

In April 2024, U.S. EPA finalized MCLs for specific PFAS, and in early 2026 the Board adopted identical-in-substance amendments to Illinois drinking water regulations, requiring Illinois Community Water Supplies to monitor these PFAS in drinking water. The Board rules require:

- Initial monitoring completed - Deadline April 25, 2027
- Ongoing compliance monitoring - Begins April 26, 2027
- Compliance with MCLs - Begins April 26, 2029



LOOK OUT FOR HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

As temperatures rise, Illinois officials remind residents to be cautious when recreating on or in Illinois waterways. Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, blooms are possible on any body of water. While these microscopic organisms are naturally occurring in lakes, streams, and ponds, a “bloom” can occur when cyanobacteria has a rapid and expansive growth. While most blooms are harmless, some produce toxic chemicals that can cause sickness or other adverse health effects in exposed people and pets. These are known as Harmful Algal Blooms.

Residents and pets should avoid contact with water that looks like spilled green or blue-green paint; has surface scums, mats, or films; has a blue or green crust at the shoreline; is discolored or has green-colored streaks; or has greenish globs suspended in the water below the surface. If you are concerned you have symptoms from exposure to algal toxins, contact a health care provider or call the Illinois Poison Center Helpline at 1-800-222-1222. If pets experience symptoms, contact a veterinarian immediately.

Illinois EPA has launched the [2026 Harmful Algal Bloom Program](#), which includes routine monitoring at lakes and lake beaches throughout Illinois. Illinois EPA also conducts “Event Response” to investigate credible reports of a potential cyanobacteria bloom. The [Harmful Algal Bloom Dashboard](#) includes a map of blooms that have been reported to the Illinois EPA, investigated, and confirmed. The public [Illinois Bloom Report Form](#) can be used to report a suspected Harmful Algal Bloom to the Agency. Additional info on algal blooms, including how to identify a bloom, is available on the [Illinois EPA website](#).



FISH CONTAMINANT MONITORING PROGRAM RESULTS IN NEW SPORT FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

Contaminants in Illinois sport fish are monitored by the Illinois Fish Contaminant Monitoring Program (FCMP), which is a cooperative effort between the Illinois EPA, and the Departments of Public Health (IDPH), Agriculture, and Natural Resources. In 2023, the FCMP began analyzing all fish tissue samples for 25 Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and has expanded to 40 PFAS. The FCMP collects approximately 250 fish samples from 40-50 stream, river, and inland lake stations and from Lake Michigan each year. Illinois EPA’s Laboratory analyzes the samples for PFAS, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), and Methylmercury. Fish consumption advisories, issued by IDPH, reflect recommended dietary restrictions for a specific species within a specific water body. Illinois waterbodies with “Do Not Eat” Advisories for PFAS include Franklin Creek (Lee County), Monee Reservoir (Will County), and SIU Campus Lake (Jackson County). Additional advisories that restrict consumption of fish based on PFAS, PCBs, or methylmercury can be found on the [IDPH Fish Advisory webpage](#).





BE AWARE OF YOUR AIR QUALITY

Most people remember the summer of 2023 when Illinois experienced record levels of smoke/particulate matter pollution due to Canadian wildfires. In response, Illinois officials established Illinois-specific guidelines for issuing air quality messages to the public and to provide additional guidance for public health measures by expanding the “Air Pollution Action Day” Program statewide. These air quality messages are a call to action for residents to protect their health and for residents and businesses to reduce local contributions to air pollution such as reducing transportation, keeping vehicles and other engines properly tuned, using environmentally friendly paints and cleaning products, and conserving electricity. An Air Pollution Action Day is issued the afternoon before and will run from issuance through the next calendar day.

The Illinois EPA issues daily air quality forecasts, based on the national Air Quality Index (AQI), for 14 sectors throughout Illinois. The AQI is a six color-coded system that classifies air quality from Good (Green) to Hazardous (Maroon). All air quality forecasts are available at [AirNow.gov](https://airnow.gov). In addition to the AirNow.gov, residents can subscribe to FREE air quality forecasts and alerts through the [EnviroFlash](#) program and download the FREE AIRNow App for iPhone and Android phones: [iPhone App](#) | [Android App](#).



PUBLIC NOTICES AND SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENT

The Illinois EPA issues a public notice to inform the public about proposed actions, permits, or decisions that may affect communities or the environment. To view current public notices, please visit the Illinois EPA website at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/public-notices.html>. Individuals or stakeholders wanting to submit a comment for a current public notice can find “[Tips for Writing an Effective Public Comment](#)” on the public notice page.



FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO CONDUCT RESIDENTIAL SHARPS COLLECTIONS

Illinois EPA has announced a new round of annual funding for units of local government for the safe collection and proper disposal of household sharps from residents. Through this program, approximately 32,807 pounds of medical sharps have been collected and properly disposed. Grants per applicant are capped at \$35,000. Applications will be accepted until funding is expended or March 31, 2027. Details on the program and a current list of Sharps collection sites is available on our [Residential Sharps Collection Program webpage](#).

Illinois EPA routinely announces funding opportunities for various Agency programs. All current funding opportunities can be viewed on our [Grants and Loans webpage](#)





ACCESSING ILLINOIS EPA RECORDS

To improve access to highly sought Agency records, the Illinois EPA makes certain documents available for viewing and downloading in PDF format through our online [Document Explorer](#) tool. These include:

- Air permits (construction and operating)
- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) water discharge permits
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) technical documents
- Site Remediation Program (SRP) technical documents
- State Response Action technical documents
- Final Compliance Commitment Agreements since January 1, 2014

For documents that are not available through the online tool, individuals may submit a [Freedom of Information Act Request](#). Answers to Frequently Asked Questions are also available on our FOIA page.



NEED TO REPORT A POLLUTION COMPLAINT?

Illinois EPA is committed to responding to complaints as quickly as possible. The quickest and easiest way to submit a complaint to Illinois EPA is through the [online complaint form](#). Individuals can also contact the closest [Illinois EPA Regional Office](#). If you need to report an environmental emergency, please contact the Illinois Emergency Management Agency directly at 800-782-7860.



SIGN-UP TO RECEIVE NEWS AND INFORMATION

Illinois EPA has mailing lists to provide regular updates for several of our programs. To receive the monthly *Illinois EPA Impact* newsletter or receive updates about Electric Vehicles, Energy Programs, Environmental Justice news, and more, please submit your information through our subscription signups at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/about-us/contact-us/lists.html>



JOIN OUR TEAM

At Illinois EPA, we strive to identify and hire a diverse team of professionals to help advance the mission of the Agency. There are many different job classifications defined by Central Management Services (CMS). The Illinois EPA has a variety of technical and professional staff positions, including specialists, geologists, engineers, biologists, chemists, as well as positions involved with legal and administrative services. View current postings [on our website](#).

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