



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chillicothe Community Water System Notified of Right-to-Know Requirements Triggered by Newly Required Sampling PFAS Chemicals Detected in Groundwater; System Owner/Operator, Private Well Owners, and all Residents are Encouraged to be Proactive in Reducing PFAS Exposure

Springfield – The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) has notified the owner and operator of the Chillicothe Community Water System (CWS) in Peoria County that there has been a detection of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) compounds, in water samples collected by the CWS, as part of the PFAS Initial Monitoring Period, which followed the January 2026 adoption of PFAS maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) in Illinois. The samples identified PFOS at 33 parts per trillion (ppt) and PFHxS at 40 ppt, which are both above the Illinois Class I groundwater quality standards of 4 ppt and 10 ppt respectively.

The 2009 Right-to-Know law requires owners and operators of CWSs to notify their customers when groundwater contamination poses a threat of exposure to the public above the Class I groundwater quality standards. In 2025, Illinois adopted new groundwater quality standards for six PFAS, based on the most recent scientific information available. Those include perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), PFOS, hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid, also known as GenX (HFPO-DA), PFHxS, perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), and perfluorobutanesulfonic acid (PFBS). In January 2026, Illinois also adopted amendments to Illinois drinking water regulations that are identical in substance to U.S. EPA established MCLs (federal drinking water standards) for certain PFAS. CWSs were required to begin sampling for those PFAS in April 2026 and must comply with the federal MCLs for PFAS by April 2029.

“Since 2020, Illinois EPA has been proactive in identifying the prevalence of PFAS in drinking water, including supporting adoption of new groundwater standards and state drinking water standards for PFAS chemicals,” **said Illinois EPA Director James Jennings**. “This notification is both required by state law and is intended to encourage everyone to be proactive in reducing exposure to PFAS compounds given their ubiquitous presence in the environment.”

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PFAS have been used in a wide range of consumer products, industrial processes, and in some fire-fighting foams (called aqueous film-forming foam or AFFF) since the 1940s. This has resulted in the release of PFAS into the air, water, and soil. PFAS do not easily break down under natural conditions and are often referred to as “forever chemicals.”

PFAS are stable, persistent chemicals that bioaccumulate in blood and organs over time. As a result, all residents may be at risk from PFAS exposure. Current scientific literature indicates that people are primarily exposed to PFAS through the ingestion of food and water. Everyone is encouraged to be proactive in addressing potential PFAS contamination, not only in drinking water, but through the other common routes of exposure. Ways to reduce exposure include:

- Choose stainless steel, cast iron, or non-stick cookware that does not contain PFAS.
- Avoid water repellents on clothing.
- Use personal care products without “PTFE” or “Fluoro” ingredients.
- Use water filters designed to remove PFAS (NSF/ANSI 53 or 58 standards).

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) also encourages private well owners near the impacted water system to test their well water for PFAS or consider installing treatment, such as activated carbon filters, on drinking water faucets. Private well owners who have health-related questions or require technical assistance can contact IDPH by phone at (217) 782-5830 or by email at dph.tox@Illinois.gov.

Attached is a copy of the Public Health Notice being provided to the CWS and customers, which includes information on potential health effects, home water filter treatment options, and ways to minimize PFAS exposure from other sources. The notice provided to CWS will be posted on the Illinois EPA website at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/drinking-water/public-water-users/notices.html>. More information regarding PFAS, including health effects and additional ways to reduce exposure, is available on the Illinois EPA PFAS webpage at <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality/pfas.html>.

Additional information can be found on the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry website at: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/>. The IDPH provides additional information on PFAS in drinking water at: <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/private-water/fact-sheets/pfas-drinking-water.html>.

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Attachment: Public Health Notice



Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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JB Pritzker, Governor

James Jennings, Director

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE – IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Why You're Receiving This Notice

Two Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) analytes listed below were detected in the Chillicothe Community Water System at levels above the groundwater quality standards established by the State of Illinois. This notice is required by law under the Illinois Environmental Protection Act.

PFAS Analyte	Acronym	Analytical Result (parts per trillion)	Class I Groundwater Quality Standard (parts per trillion)
Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid	PFOS	33	4.0
Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid	PFHxS	40	10.0

What Are PFAS?

PFAS are human-made chemicals used since the 1940s. Because they repel oil and water and resist heat, they are commonly found in products such as non-stick cookware, food packaging, waterproof clothing, stain-resistant furniture, and firefighting foam. PFAS pollute water through spills, leaks, and disposal of products. They are often called “forever chemicals” because they remain in the environment for decades.

Health Risks

Long-term exposure to PFAS may increase the risk of:

- Fertility problems and high blood pressure during pregnancy
- Developmental impacts in children
- Certain cancers, including kidney, prostate, and testicular
- A weakened immune system
- Disruption to key hormonal systems, such as thyroid function, reproductive hormones, stress response, and metabolic regulation

Exposure does not guarantee health problems. Risk depends on the PFAS level and how long you've been exposed. Consult your healthcare provider for health concerns.



Reducing PFAS in Your Drinking Water

Boiling water does not remove PFAS, but certain water filters can reduce or remove them. With many filters on the market, it's important to choose one that is specifically certified to remove or reduce PFAS. Filters vary by type, brand, and installation method—such as pitcher filters, faucet-mounted units, or whole-home systems. Below are types of filters shown to effectively reduce or remove PFAS levels:

- **Charcoal (Granular Activated Carbon or GAC)** – traps chemicals as water flows through
- **Reverse Osmosis (RO) Systems** – filters out pollutants using a thin membrane
- **Ion Exchange Resins** –tiny beads that attract and hold contaminants

Check for Certification

Use filters that meet National Sanitation Foundation/American National Standards Institute (NSF/ANSI) standards, specifically NSF/ANSI 53 (for reducing health-related contaminants, including PFAS) or NSF/ANSI 58 (for reverse osmosis systems). You can verify certification at: <https://info.nsf.org/Certified/dwtu/>. Be sure to replace filters as directed by the manufacturer; failure to do so can increase PFAS exposure.

Questions?

Contact Jeff Guy, Illinois EPA Office of Community Relations:

☎ (217) 785-8724 or ✉ Jeff.Guy@illinois.gov

Learn More

Scan the QR code below to visit the Illinois EPA PFAS information page:

<https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality/pfas.html>



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इस पत्र के अनुवाद का अनुरोध करने के लिए, कृपया epa.contactus@illinois.gov ईमेल करें

이 서신의 번역본은 이메일: epa.contactus@illinois.gov 로 요청해 주세요.

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