

Drinking Water Advisory / Updates Regarding PFOA/PFOS

City Of Ringgold, Georgia

11/20/2023

On June 15, 2022 the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued new lifetime health advisories for four Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), replacing the health advisories that the EPA issued in 2016. New interim health advisories have been issued for Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) which are drastically lower than the 2016 health advisories of 70 parts per trillion. Final health advisories have been issued for Hexafluoropropylene Oxide Dimer Acid and its Ammonium Salt (also known as "GenX Chemicals") and Perfluorobutane Sulfonate (PFBS). These new advisory levels are:

Chemical	Lifetime Health Advisory Level/Value (parts per trillion or ppt)
PFOA	0.004 (Interim)
PFOS	0.02 (Interim)
GenX Chemicals	10 (Final)
PFBS	2,000 (Final)

What is a Health Advisory?

A health advisory provides information on a contaminant that can cause negative human health effects and is known or anticipated to occur in drinking water. EPA's health advisories are non-enforceable and non-regulatory. They provide technical information to drinking water system operators, as well as federal, state, Tribal, and local officials, on the health effects, analytical methods, and treatment technologies associated with drinking water contaminants. This health effects information includes the concentrations of such drinking water contaminants (the health advisory "levels" or "values") at which adverse health effects are not anticipated to occur over specific exposure durations, such as one-day, 10-days or a lifetime.

EPA's health advisory levels offer information that may be used to protect people from adverse health effects resulting from exposure throughout their lives to contaminants in drinking water. These new health advisories will remain in place until the EPA establishes a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, which we understand will be announced later this year. Thereafter, the City will have time to come into compliance with whatever the final regulations are, possibly through 2026.

What are PFAS?

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large and diverse group of chemicals used in many commercial applications due to their unique properties, such as resistance to high and low temperatures, resistance to degradation, and nonstick characteristics. Although PFAS have been

manufactured and used broadly in commerce since the 1940s, concern over potential adverse effects on human health grew in the early 2000s with the detection of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in human blood. Since that time, hundreds of different PFAS have been found in water, soil, and air. Many PFAS are made up of long chains of carbon-fluorine bonds, such as PFOA and PFOS, are environmentally persistent, bioaccumulative, and remain in human bodies for a long time.

Most uses of PFOA and PFOS were voluntarily phased out by U.S. manufacturers in the mid-2000s, although there are a limited number of ongoing uses, and these chemicals remain in the environment due to their persistence and lack of degradation. In addition, some newer PFAS in use break down into PFOA and PFOS.

What is the City of Ringgold doing about PFAS?

The City of Ringgold is actively working on solutions to reduce the levels of PFAS in the City's drinking water. The city is looking into the use of Granular Activated Carbon ("GAC") which will reduce the levels of PFOA in the City's drinking water to levels under the Health Advisory. The city will continue to perform ongoing testing of the drinking water and report test results to the Georgia EPD. The city, going forward, will continue to investigate and develop techniques to provide safe potable water to its citizens.

Based on the current laboratory testing methods (current methods test only as low as 4 parts per trillion) for PFAS, the new EPA health advisory levels for PFOA and PFOS are below the level of both detection (determining whether a substance is present) and quantitation (the ability to reliably determine how much of a substance is present). This means that it is possible for PFOA or PFOS to be present in drinking water at levels that exceed health advisories even if laboratory testing indicates no level of these chemicals.

We recognize that the levels of PFOA in our water are above the new EPA health advisory levels, announced on June 15, 2022. Latest testing shows our levels of PFOA at 5.3 parts per trillion while our levels of PFOS, GenX Chemicals, and PFBS remain significantly below the Health Advisory. While there is no such thing as "zero" in science, we agree that lower levels mean lower risks. So, we are following GA EPD and EPA's recommendations that we inform our customers, undertake sampling to assess the level, scope, and source of contamination, and examine steps to limit exposure. While water systems may not be able to eliminate all risks from PFOA and PFOS, they can successfully reduce those risks.

Protection of public health and the environment as well as the quality of your drinking water remain our top priorities.

If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to us. We are always available to talk with the consumer about how we produce and deliver your drinking water and the steps that our team takes to ensure its quality. You can also find additional information at epd.georgia.gov/pfoa-and-pfos-information and epa.gov/pfas