National Drinking Water Standard for PFAS

Today, April 10, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standard to protect communities from exposure to harmful per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as 'forever chemicals.'

Details about the final PFAS drinking water standards:

- For PFOA and PFOS, EPA is setting a Maximum Contaminant Level Goal, a non-enforceable health-based goal, at zero. This reflects the latest science showing that there is no level of exposure to these contaminants without risk of health impacts, including certain cancers.
- EPA is setting enforceable Maximum Contaminant Levels at 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, individually. This standard will reduce exposure from these PFAS in our drinking water to the lowest levels that are feasible for effective implementation.
- For PFNA, PFHxS, and "GenX Chemicals," EPA is setting the MCLGs and MCLs at 10 parts per trillion.
- Because PFAS can often be found together in mixtures, and research shows these mixtures may have combined health impacts, EPA is also setting a limit for any mixture of two or more of the following PFAS: PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and "GenX Chemicals."

Compound	Final MCLG	Final MCL (enforceable levels)
PFOA	Zero	4.0 parts per trillion (ppt) (also expressed as ng/L)
PFOS	Zero	4.0 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt	10 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt	10 ppt
HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX Chemicals)	10 ppt	10 ppt
Mixtures containing two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS	1 (unitless) Hazard Index	1 (unitless) Hazard Index

The final rule requires:

- Public water systems must monitor for these PFAS and have three years to complete initial monitoring (by 2027), followed by ongoing compliance monitoring. Water systems must also provide the public with information on the levels of these PFAS in their drinking water beginning in 2027.

- Public water systems have five years (by 2029) to implement solutions that reduce these PFAS if monitoring shows that drinking water levels exceed these MCLs.
- Beginning in five years (2029), public water systems that have PFAS in drinking water which violates one or more of these MCLs must take action to reduce levels of these PFAS in their drinking water and must provide notification to the public of the violation.

The federal regulation applies to 66,000 public water systems in the United States. Water utilities will have three years to "complete their initial monitoring" for PFAS and will need to comply with the drinking water regulations starting in 2029.

EPA indicates it will be working closely with State co-regulators in supporting water systems and local officials to implement this rule. For information about EPA's plans to hold a series of webinars, visit EPA's PFAS drinking water regulation webpage. EPA has published a toolkit of communications resources to help drinking water systems and community leaders educate the public about PFAS, where they come from, their health risks, how to reduce exposure, and about this rule.

2024 PFAS Destruction and Disposal Interim Guidance

On April 9, 2024, EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management released the 2024 "Interim Guidance on the Destruction and Disposal of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances and Materials Containing Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances" for public comment. The document is an update to the interim guidance EPA first issued in December 2020 per the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act, which directed EPA to update the interim guidance as "the Administrator determines to be appropriate, but not less frequently than once every three years." Its primary audience is decision makers who need to identify the most effective means for destroying or disposing of PFAS-containing materials and wastes.

View Guidance Document

EPA will accept comments on the interim guidance for 180 days following publication in the Federal Register to help inform a future update to this guidance. Comments can be submitted to the public docket at Regulations.gov, Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OLEM-2020-0527.