



Town of Sudbury

Board of Health

Sudbury Health Department
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Dear Property Owner:

The Sudbury Health Department is initiating outreach to private well owners for 2 reasons:

1. To verify that you have a well (either irrigation or potable). If you are receiving this letter and you do not have a well, please contact us by email health@sudbury.ma.us so we can update our records:
2. To communicate regarding a newly emerging water contaminant called "PFAS". A notice was issued by the [Sudbury Water District](#) and this information may be informative for private well owners.

What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a family of chemicals used since the 1950s to manufacture stain-resistant, water-resistant, and non-stick products. PFAS are widely used in common consumer products as coatings on food packaging, outdoor clothing, carpets, leather goods, ski and snowboard waxes, and more.

Certain types of firefighting foam historically used by the U.S. military, local fire departments, and airports to fight oil and gasoline fires may contain PFAS.

PFAS in drinking water is an important emerging issue nationwide. Because PFAS are water soluble, over time PFAS from some firefighting foam, manufacturing sites, landfills, spills, air deposition from factories and other releases can seep into surface soils. From there, PFAS can leach into groundwater or surface water, and can contaminate drinking water. PFAS have also been found in rivers, lakes, fish, and wildlife.

PFAS stay in the environment for a long time and do not break down easily. As a result, PFAS are widely detected in soil, water, air, and food. Some PFAS can accumulate in the food chain. Exposure can occur when someone uses certain products that contain PFAS, eats PFAS contaminated food, or drinks PFAS contaminated water. When ingested, some PFAS can build up in the body and, over time, these PFAS may increase to a level where health effects could occur.

Studies indicate that exposure to sufficiently elevated levels of certain PFAS may cause a variety of health effects including developmental effects in fetuses and infants, effects on the thyroid, liver, kidneys, certain hormones and the immune system. Some studies suggest a cancer risk may also exist in people exposed to higher levels of some PFAS. Scientists and regulators are still working to study and better understand the health risks posed by exposures to PFAS, and MassDEP is following developments in this burgeoning area closely.

What are the levels of concern for PFAS chemicals?

On October 2, 2020, [MassDEP published its PFAS public drinking water standard](#), which called for a Massachusetts Maximum Contamination Level (MMCL), of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) (or parts per trillion (ppt)) -individually or for the sum of the concentrations of six specific PFAS. These PFAS are perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS); perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA); perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS); perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA); perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA); and perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA). MassDEP abbreviates this set of six PFAS as "PFAS6." This drinking water standard is set to be protective against adverse health effects for all people consuming the water (please note this applies to **public** wells only). Public Drinking water wells must be tested monthly. Elevated PFAS levels require notification and possible action.

Private Wells

Private Wells are currently not included in this new MassDEP Regulation. MassDEP is waiting to obtain more results from both the private and public well PFAS sampling efforts before considering making any changes to the recommended contaminants for private well owners relative to PFAS testing. MassDEP does not currently recommend that all private wells be tested for PFAS. But they would recommend testing if there is a reason to suspect that a private well may be contaminated by PFAS. They would also recommend testing for PFAS if a well is in the vicinity of a public drinking well that has PFAS levels above 20 ppt or elevated PFAS levels (but not above the actionable level).

If a potential source of PFAS contamination is identified by MassDEP, such that one or more parcels of land are assigned a MassDEP Bureau of Waste site Cleanup (BWSC) tracking number (for a potentially high level of PFAS) then the BWSC would require the responsible/potentially responsible parties to offer sampling of nearby private wells (testing would likely be within 500 feet of the site and it would continue to expand that search until they reach the end of the contaminant plume).

The Sudbury Health Department wants to make private well owners aware of this newly emerging water contaminant. The State and Town are not currently offering programs where money is available to test private wells in Sudbury. If you have concerns you may consider testing your well at your expense. Helpful information is listed below on the state's website.

What you need to know about the possibility of PFAS in private well water and information on testing: [Frequently asked questions about PFAS and Private Drinking Wells](#)

Information on PFAS

The Sudbury Water District has created a webpage with substantial information about PFAS. Please visit the Water District's website for more information: [PFAS and Sudbury Drinking Water Supply](#)

For general information and guidance on private wells including testing frequency, maintenance, and care, please go to the [MassDEP Website](#)

To locate a certified laboratory for water testing visit:

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/find-a-certified-laboratory-for-water-testing>

