

PFOA/PFOS INFORMATION

Notice and Updates Regarding PFOA/PFOS

August 18, 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	.004 (Interim)
PFOS	.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 “value”) 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, possible 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 users, and these chemicals remain in the environment due to their persistence and lack of degradation. In addition, some new PFAS in use break down into PFOA and FOS.

What is the City of Blairsville doing about PFAS?

The City of Blairsville was notified by GA EPD of slightly elevated levels of PFOS in a water sample submitted earlier this year. We are following GA EPD and EPA's recommendations that we inform our customers, undertake more frequent 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. City of Blairsville will be actively working towards short and long term treatment solutions to reduce or remove these chemicals from our drinking water. Along with treatment solutions, we will be pursuing grant funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to help aid in the cost of this treatment.

City of Blairsville is providing this information so that our customers can make informed choices regarding the health and safety for themselves and their families. Customers that have concerns about the current levels of PFOA & PFOS found in their drinking water should consider actions that may reduce exposure. More information regarding steps you can take to reduce your risk can be found on the EPA website at:

<https://www.epa.gov/pfas/meaningful-and-achievable-steps-you-can-take-reduce-your-risk>

Additional information regarding PFOA & PFOS and the current EPA health advisory is available at the following links:

EPA's Drinking Water Health Advisories

<https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>

EPA's Health Advisories Q&A

<https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/questions-and-answers-drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-pfos-genx-chemicals-and-pfbs>

GA EPD PFOA & PFOS Story Map with Recorded Levels by Location

<https://gaepd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=e8f2c6a51c1c41088002350f1eabe598>