



Fact Sheet

DEQ Cleanup Program – Update on PFAS Regulations

Updated October 2025

Background

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly called PFAS, are human-made organic compounds that have been manufactured since the 1940s for a variety of uses. Many PFAS are highly toxic, mobile, and persistent in the environment. The chemical properties that distinguish them from other chemicals of interest are a unique combination of increased solubility and mobility in water, high bioaccumulation rates in biological tissue and food webs, and high persistence in the environment.

Until recently, PFAS were most commonly present in Class B firefighting foams, which are associated with fire training, prevention, and response activities. They were also historically used for vapor suppression, and oil- and -water resistant surface coatings. Examples of facilities that may be sources of PFAS releases to the environment include airports, municipal fire training sites, bulk fuel storage sites, plating and metal finishers, paper mills and paper product manufacturers, electronics and semiconductor manufacturers, aviation and aerospace manufacturers, textile and leather processors, dry cleaners and commercial laundries, etc.

DEQ's Cleanup Program identifies the most common and notable PFAS sources as "Tier 1" sites and include: ¹

- Airports, municipal fire training facilities, or other facilities with known or likely AFFF storage/use
- Bulk fuel facilities/refineries
- Metal plating operations
- Sites known or suspected to use PFAS (Tier 2 sites) near detections of PFAS in drinking water systems

The Cleanup Program's initial efforts will include information and data collection at Tier 1 sites. The program may also request sampling at sites that are not on the Tier 1 list if a facility has known or highly suspected PFAS use or release, or if impacts to people or the environment is a concern.

¹ North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes related to PFAS industries and California State Water Resources Control Board administrative orders targeting specific industries.

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DEQ will also consider sites beyond Tier 1 sites with high potential to release PFAS. Such sites include but are not necessarily limited to the following Tier 2 facility types:

- Semiconductor and other electronics parts manufacturing
- Pulp and paper mills and paper or cardboard product manufacturing
- Plastics and chemical manufacturing, bulk storage, transport industries, and allied services
- Ink, film, and chemical coating manufacture and application services, including printing
- Textile or upholstery and leather manufacturing, maintenance, or repair
- Large commercial or industrial-scale dry cleaners and laundries

Consistent with its historical practice, the Cleanup Program does not expect to pursue investigation of permitted facilities such as wastewater treatment facilities and landfills undergoing active oversight by other DEQ or EPA programs. The Cleanup Program will identify users of PFAS that may have impacted public drinking water supply areas or groundwater or surface water resources in Oregon, including fish.

As with other regulated contaminants (petroleum, metals, polychlorinated biphenyls, dioxins and furans, pesticides, etc.), Cleanup Program activities will focus on: 1) contaminant release sites (sources) that may pose a higher risk to people and the environment (high or medium priority sites); or 2) lower-priority sites that voluntarily engage DEQ in pursuit of a No Further Action determination, Prospective Purchaser Agreement, or other administrative decision.

General regulations

In September 2025, the Environmental Quality Commission adopted rules to add six PFAS to the definition of hazardous substances in Oregon Administrative Rule 340-122-0115 (30): perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA, commonly known as GenX), and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS). As of October 2025, DEQ's Cleanup Program has developed risk-based concentrations (RBCs) for 17 PFAS chemicals.

In 2024, EPA designated two PFAS chemicals, PFOA and PFOS, as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. EPA also issued enforceable drinking water standards, called maximum contaminant levels, or MCLs, for six PFAS chemicals, including PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS. EPA has proposed rescinding its MCLs for four of the six chemicals (retaining those for PFOA and PFOS) but had not done so as of October 2025.

EPA has issued soil, water, and leaching-to-groundwater Regional Screening Levels for many PFAS chemicals. EPA has issued final Nationally Recommended Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criteria for PFOS and PFOA for water column and fish and invertebrate tissue concentrations, and Aquatic Life Benchmarks for eight additional PFAS. EPA also issued draft AWQC for the human ingestion of PFAS-contaminated surface water and organisms.

Analytical testing

EPA has approved analytical test methods for the most common PFAS chemicals. For soil, sediment, water, and tissue, use EPA Method 1633. For drinking water, EPA Methods 533 and 537 are also commonly used. Detection and reporting limits are generally below EPA MCLs and/or screening values.

Multiple analytical laboratories are available for sample testing. As of 2025, costs for water analysis range from \$300-\$400 per sample for EPA Method 1633. This method provides results for 40 chemicals, including all of those currently regulated by EPA and DEQ.

PFAS in the DEQ Cleanup Program

Sites active in the Cleanup Program

DEQ's Cleanup Program is incorporating the six PFAS listed as hazardous substances into existing processes for addressing environmental contamination, such as site investigations, risk assessments, and cleanup actions. This means DEQ will require PFAS testing at sites where an environmental release is a concern based on site history or past industrial practices and exposure risks. If responsible parties do not respond to requests for data, DEQ may withhold administrative decision-making/closure. As with other regulated contaminants, DEQ may consider use of enforceable agreements, as needed, where parties are unresponsive and there is a known or suspected risk to people or the environment.

For sites active in the Cleanup Program, please let your DEQ project manager know if you suspect PFAS may have been used or released at your site. Your DEQ project manager may also reach out to you requesting PFAS sampling.

Closed cleanup sites

DEQ will consider the need for PFAS testing at closed sites on a case-by-case basis. DEQ will prioritize sites with known or suspected PFAS releases to groundwater or surface water, or where impacts to people or the environment are a concern. In general, DEQ's Cleanup Program has not reopened sites unless there is a compelling risk concern.

Investigating new potential cleanup sites

DEQ will conduct phased outreach to Tier 1 sites not currently in the Cleanup Program. DEQ will request information on historical PFAS use and releases and submission of any existing sampling results. If no testing has been completed, DEQ will request collection of reconnaissance-level soil and groundwater data to determine whether environmental releases have occurred. Similar outreach may occur for Tier 2 sites where releases to groundwater or surface water are suspected or PFAS have been detected in nearby public drinking water systems.

As with other hazardous substances, DEQ may consider use of enforceable agreements for Tier 1 or other high concern sites where there is a known or suspected risk to people or the environment and when the responsible party(ies) do not voluntarily collect PFAS data or enter into the Cleanup Program.

For prospective or current property owners

If you are considering purchasing property where a PFAS release may have occurred, in particular in the Tier 1 or Tier 2 category, DEQ recommends completing [due diligence](#). If you own a property with potential PFAS concerns and would like to work with the Cleanup Program on a voluntary basis, please contact us at info.cleanup@deq.oregon.gov.

Sites with known or suspected PFAS contamination are eligible for DEQ's [Prospective Purchaser Agreement](#) Program and will need to be evaluated for PFAS as appropriate. Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments should consider PFAS, if known or suspected to be present.

Program name and contacts

If you would like to join the Cleanup Program to investigate PFAS at your site or have questions, please contact us at info.cleanup@deq.oregon.gov. If you have other questions about PFAS and the Cleanup Program, please contact us at CleanupPFASWorkGroup@deq.oregon.gov. Further information on DEQ's Cleanup Program process and priorities can be found on [DEQ's website](#).

Non-discrimination statement

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