

Frequently Asked Questions about the PFAS Sampling Project April 2025

What is the PFAS Sampling Project and what is its purpose?

OHA-DWS is conducting a PFAS drinking water sampling project at small public water systems in Oregon that have not already sampled for PFAS. The purpose of the project is to identify water systems with PFAS detections so they can access currently available funding to address the issue. The sample will count toward meeting some of the initial monitoring requirements under the new national PFAS drinking water regulations. The analysis is being paid for with federal funding and will be done at no cost to the water system. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) lab will be collecting and analyzing drinking water the samples for 25 PFAS compounds using EPA method 533. A list of the compounds can be found here under the “Method 533” column: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-12/documents/table_of_pfas_methods_533_and_537.1.pdf.

What are Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)?

PFAS are a group of man-made chemical compounds that persist in the environment for long periods of time. They are often called “forever chemicals.” For decades PFAS chemicals have been used in industry and consumer products such as nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing, and stain resistant furniture. These chemicals have been important for certain industries and uses. The latest science shows that these chemicals are harmful to our health. More information about PFAS can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>.

Which public water systems are included in the PFAS sampling project?

All Community (CWS) and non-profit Non-Transient, Non-Community (NTNC) water systems serving less than 3,300 people that have not already sampled for PFAS. Sampling will also occur at water systems where previous sampling by OHA was not able to report results down to the new regulatory levels.

How and when will the sampling occur?

Coordinating with OHA-DWS, DEQ staff will collect samples. Sampling is scheduled to begin late-summer 2025 and continue through spring 2026. DEQ staff will contact water systems directly to arrange a time for sample collection. One sample will be collected from each active entry point (EP) to the distribution system during normal operating conditions.

Are PFAS regulated in drinking water?

On April 10, 2024, EPA announced final regulations for six PFAS chemicals. EPA established legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water: PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, and HFPO-DA as contaminants with individual MCLs, and PFAS mixtures containing at least two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS using a Hazard Index MCL to account for the combined and co-occurring levels of these PFAS in drinking water.

<u>Compound</u>	<u>MCLs (enforceable Levels)</u>
PFOA	4.0 parts per trillion (ppt) (also expressed as ng/L)
PFOS	4.0 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt
HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX chemicals)	10 ppt
Mixtures containing two or more PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS	1 (unitless) Hazard Index

OHA-DWS has two years to adopt the regulations. All Community (CWS) and Non-Transient Non-Community (NTNC) public water systems must complete initial monitoring by April 2027, with ongoing compliance monitoring beginning after that date. EPA's rule requires action by 2029 at Oregon public water systems where PFAS exceed an MCL. For information about the rule, see EPA's website here: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>.

What are the health effects from exposure to PFAS?

PFAS exposure over a long period of time can cause cancer and other serious illnesses that decrease quality of life or result in death. PFAS exposure during critical life stages such as pregnancy or early childhood can also result in adverse health impacts. More information about health effects can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas>.

Is this any more PFAS monitoring my water system needs to do?

- **Yes.** The new PFAS regulations requires all CWS and NTNC water systems to collect either 2 or 4 samples for initial monitoring depending on source water type (groundwater or surface water) and population served by April 2027:
 - For entry points to the distribution system only served by groundwater and population of 10,000 or less: **2 consecutive samples per entry point within a 12-month period** with samples collected 5 to 7 months apart.

- For entry points served by surface water (all populations): **4 consecutive quarters of samples per entry point within a 12-month period** with samples collected 2 to 4 months apart.
- ***Public water systems are responsible for collecting any additional PFAS samples needed to meet the initial monitoring requirements under the rule by April 2027. Make sure additional samples you collect are either 5-7 months apart (groundwater) or 2-4 months apart (surface water) from the sample collected by DEQ.*** If you choose not to participate or are unable to schedule a time for DEQ to collect a sample, the water system must collect all required samples (either 2 or 4 samples) to meet the initial monitoring requirements under the new PFAS rule.
- Water systems can use previously acquired PFAS monitoring data to satisfy some or all of the initial monitoring requirements. If a water system has some previously collected results meeting the PFAS Rule requirements, but less than necessary to meet the initial monitoring requirements, the system can supplement with additional monitoring events such that all required calendar periods are represented, regardless of the year.
- Public water systems must use a lab approved by EPA or the state to analyze the remaining PFAS samples needed to meet the initial monitoring requirements. See our website here for a list of labs accredited by Oregon for PFAS analysis in drinking water: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/RULES/Pages/PFAS-Rule.aspx>

What will happen based on the results of sampling done for the PFAS Sampling Project?

The DEQ Lab will upload the results to OHA-DWS, and they will be displayed on your water system's [Data Online](#) webpage. Results will also be emailed to water systems with an email address on file. OHA-DWS will follow-up with public water systems that have PFAS detections by providing information on how the results compare to the new regulatory levels and information on available funding to address the contaminant.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Emerging Contaminants Funding (BIL-EC) and Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Funding (EC-SDC) are available to address PFAS and other emerging contaminants in drinking water. For more information about emerging contaminant funding, see our OHA-DWS website here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/SRF/Pages/bil.aspx>

What if non-regulated PFAS chemicals are detected?

If PFAS without an MCL are detected, OHA-DWS may provide the water system with information about any currently available state/international drinking water standards /

800 NE Oregon St., Ste 640, Portland, OR 97232-2162

Voice: 971-673-0405 | Fax: 503-673-0694

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guidance levels for those compounds to help the water system determine the risk to public health and communicate that risk to its water users. If necessary, OHA-DWS may consult with OHA toxicologists on health risks, or request assistance from EPA in interpreting the results.

For more information:

- Oregon Health Authority-Drinking Water Services PFAS rule website:
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/RULES/Pages/PFAS-Rule.aspx>
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) PFAS rule website:
<https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>