



Department of Environmental Protection

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Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides
Secretary

Martin Suuberg
Commissioner

November 30, 2020

Re: MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program

Dear Boards of Health, Municipal Leaders, and Other Interested Parties:

This letter is to advise you of an opportunity for laboratory analyses of samples from private wells for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at no charge, under the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program. This program is focused on private wells in areas not predominantly served by Public Water Systems.

As you may be aware, on October 2, 2020, MassDEP published its PFAS public drinking water standard of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) (or parts per trillion [ppt]) – individually or for the sum of the concentrations of six specific PFAS: 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. The drinking water standard complements the PFAS waste site notification and cleanup requirements our Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup established in late December 2019.

One of MassDEP’s top responsibilities is to protect public health and drinking water quality for all public drinking water in the Commonwealth. We are also concerned about the safety of private drinking water wells, which are regulated by local boards of health. To assist in these priorities and to characterize the extent of PFAS in the Commonwealth, the Baker-Polito Administration sought and received funding from the Legislature to support testing for PFAS in drinking water in both public water supplies and selected private wells.

Residents of Massachusetts receive their drinking water from approximately 1600 Public Water Systems and from private wells, with more than 500,000 residents served by private wells. The MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program will be used to characterize PFAS levels in towns that are not predominantly served by Public Water Systems. MassDEP is partnering with UMass to undertake this program, which consists of the following:

- MassDEP has identified 81 towns where more than 60% of the population is served by private wells. A list of the 81 towns is attached.
- Within these 81 towns, MassDEP will work with its UMass contractor, local Boards of Health, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and other local partners to identify private wells in

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

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each town for potential PFAS analysis based on geographic distribution within the town and/or proximity to potential sources of PFAS.

- MassDEP/the UMass contactor/local partners will contact the identified well owners and offer the opportunity to sign up for free PFAS sampling. Approximately 40 wells will then be selected in each town for PFAS drinking water lab analysis. The UMass contactor/local partners will contact the selected well owners to arrange for sampling.

All testing conducted under the MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program must be completed before June 30, 2021.

For more information on the opportunity to participate at no charge in this PFAS sampling program, which includes laboratory analyses of samples and receipt of results, please see the attached Frequently Asked Questions about the MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program.

If you are interested in information on the Public Water Systems PFAS Lab Analyses Program see: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>. To find information for clinicians and medical professionals, see: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/resources/index.html>. For more information about PFAS and the MassDEP's efforts to address these contaminants, please see: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas> or contact MassDEP's Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov.

Thank you for your interest in working with MassDEP to characterize this emerging contaminant and to protect public health throughout the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



Yvette DePeiza
Director, MassDEP Drinking Water Program
MassDEP

Attachments:

List of 81 priority towns

FAQ about the MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION. HAVE SOMEONE TRANSLATE IT FOR YOU OR SPEAK WITH SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS IT.

If you need this document translated, please contact MassDEP's Diversity Director, Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Diversity Director/Civil Rights: 617-292-5751 TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370. You may also contact the Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov.



Frequently Asked Questions about the MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program

Introduction

This fact sheet provides answers to questions about MassDEP's free sampling and analysis program for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in private drinking water wells. The [MassDEP Fact Sheet - PFAS in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers for Consumers](#) describes the sources of PFAS compounds, health effects, and MassDEP recommendations to reduce consumer exposure. The [Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances \(PFAS\) in Private Well Drinking Water Supplies FAQ](#) describes what private well owners need to know about the possibility of PFAS in well water.

1. What are PFAS and why are they a concern?

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals used in a variety of consumer products and industries throughout the world. PFAS have been used in some firefighting foams, a number of industrial processes, and to make materials that are resistant to water, grease and stains for use in carpets, clothing, fabrics for furniture, paper packaging for food, cookware, leather goods, ski waxes, and more. Because these chemicals have been used in many consumer products over the past 50 years, most people have been exposed to them.

PFAS have been found to seep into surface soils, groundwater and surface water, and thereby contaminate drinking water. PFAS exposures have been linked to a variety of health risks, particularly in people who are immune-compromised, women who are pregnant or nursing, and in infants. On October 2, 2020, MassDEP published its PFAS public drinking water standard of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) (or parts per trillion [ppt]) – individually or for the sum of the concentrations of six specific PFAS compounds: 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 substances as “PFAS6.” This drinking water standard was established by MassDEP to be protective against adverse health effects for all people consuming the water. For information on the PFAS6 drinking water standard see: [310 CMR 22.00: The Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations](#).

2. What are some of the reasons I might test my private well for PFAS?

If your well is located near potential sources of PFAS or near other water supplies where PFAS has been detected, you may consider sampling your well water. Potential sources of PFAS in groundwater may include airfields where firefighting foams were used, firefighting training areas, certain manufacturing facilities, and some waste disposal sites. Because PFAS have been widely used in consumer products, septic systems and landfills may also be sources of PFAS in groundwater. You may wish to sample your well even without knowledge of specific potential sources of PFAS contamination, because many potential sources of PFAS have yet to be identified.

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3. What is the MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program?

MassDEP will be conducting PFAS testing for a limited number of private wells, focusing on the 81 Massachusetts towns where 60% or more of residents are served by private wells. Private wells are regulated by local Boards of Health, which are overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. MassDEP will work with these entities, other local partners, and MassDEP’s contractor, the University of Massachusetts (UMass), to select and provide for free sampling of selected private wells. An estimated 40 wells will be selected within each of the 81 towns based on priorities including geographic distribution throughout the town, proximity to potential sources of PFAS, and available funding. Should fewer than 20 of the selected well owners opt to participate in the program, other private well owners will be invited to apply and will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis. The 81 Massachusetts towns in which 60% or more of residents are served by private wells are:

ALFORD
AQUINNAH
ASHBY
ASHFIELD
BECKET
BELCHERTOWN
BERKLEY
BERLIN
BOLTON
BOXFORD
BRIMFIELD
BUCKLAND
CARLISLE
CARVER
CHARLEMONT
CHARLTON
CHESTERFIELD
CLARKSBURG
COLRAIN
CONWAY
DOVER
DUNSTABLE
ERVING
FLORIDA
FREETOWN
GOSHEN
GRANBY

GRANVILLE
HAMPDEN
HARVARD
HAWLEY
HEATH
HOLLAND
HUBBARDSTON
LAKEVILLE
LEVERETT
LEYDEN
MENDON
MIDDLEFIELD
MILLVILLE
MONTEREY
MONTGOMERY
MOUNT WASHINGTON
NEW ASHFORD
NEW BRAINTREE
NEW MARLBOROUGH
NEW SALEM
NEWBURY
OAKHAM
OTIS
PELHAM
PERU
PETERSHAM
PHILLIPSTON

PLAINFIELD
PLYMPTON
PRINCETON
REHOBOTH
RICHMOND
ROCHESTER
ROWE
ROYALSTON
SANDISFIELD
SAVOY
SHELBURNE
SHERBORN
SHUTESBURY
STOW
SUTTON
TOLLAND
TRURO
TYNGSBOROUGH
TYRINGHAM
WALES
WARWICK
WASHINGTON
WENDELL
WEST TISBURY
WESTHAMPTON
WESTPORT
WINDSOR

4. If a well is not selected for the program, are there other resources available?

MassDEP will provide technical assistance information on PFAS for all private well owners as part of its private well guidance and outreach program that will engage Boards of Health and other local partners. There are many resources already available for private well owners listed below, and the UMass Technical Assistance Providers are available to answer questions at pfas-testing@umass.edu. The Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) is also available to provide technical assistance to private well owners. Contact RCAP at <https://www.rcapsolutions.org/contact/>.

5. How does a private well owner sign up for PFAS sampling?

If a private well owner receives an invitation for the program, they visit <https://dwp-pfas.madwpdep.org/> to apply. Once a homeowner has applied and been selected, they will be contacted by MassDEP's UMass contractor by email or other appropriate methods, asking them to confirm their contact information. UMass will respond within two weeks of receipt of a confirmed email address.

6. Who collects the water samples for the MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program?

The private well owner will be responsible for collecting the water samples, so there is no requirement to provide access to your home. MassDEP UMass contractors and the labs will provide clear, simple instructions to the private well owners on how to collect samples. A training video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrwhwSI-R9M> demonstrates how to collect drinking water samples for PFAS. MassDEP UMass contractors are also available at pfas-testing@umass.edu to guide you through sample collection and to answer any questions.

7. How does the selected private well owner get the water sample bottles for PFAS sampling?

Once the private well owner has been accepted for free PFAS lab analyses:

- 1) The MassDEP Drinking Water Program or the UMass contractor will contact the private well owner to verify their information, including mailing address, and arrange for a sample collection timeframe.
- 2) The MassDEP Contracted Laboratory will send a sampling kit to the private well owner containing instructions, a Chain-of-Custody form, and sample bottles. Return postage will be included.

Note: MassDEP has contracted with five labs to provide the free analysis for PFAS. Your contacts for any questions regarding the status of your free PFAS sampling will be:

- The UMass contractor Technical Assistance Providers at pfas-testing@umass.edu.
- The MassDEP Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov using the subject "Private Well PFAS Sampling Program."

8. How are the selected private well owners informed of the PFAS water sampling results?

After performing a quality control check and accepting the PFAS laboratory testing results, the UMass contractor will email a copy of the lab report to the private well owner with a cover letter including recommended actions, if needed. The local board of health and MassDEP will be copied on the email. The private well owner may contact the MassDEP/UMass Contractor at pfas-testing@umass.edu with any questions regarding the lab report.

9. Will MassDEP collect any additional samples after the initial samples?

If the lab results of the first sample indicate that any of the six PFAS are detected in the water, MassDEP may request that you collect one or more additional samples to confirm the result and to help identify any potential sources of PFAS contamination. The confirmatory samples are part of the free analyses; you will be contacted and provided with a confirmation sampling kit.

10. What will happen if PFAS is confirmed to be present in a private well?

The owner of a private well is generally responsible for ensuring the quality of the drinking water. MassDEP and its UMass contractor can provide technical assistance on ways to reduce exposure to PFAS in drinking water, including the use of bottled water and installation of treatment systems.

11. What will happen if PFAS in the well water is confirmed at an elevated level?

MassDEP and the UMass contractor provide technical assistance on any recommended steps to take based on the PFAS results. A PFAS6 result of 20 ppt or above is a reportable concentration under Massachusetts Regulation 310 CMR 40.0000, the [Massachusetts Contingency Plan](#). The MassDEP Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup (BWSC) will receive copies of all private well PFAS lab results for waste site notification and cleanup requirements. MassDEP BWSC will follow-up with the well owner to ensure that private wells with detections higher than 90 ppt (i.e., Imminent Hazards under the regulations) are addressed in a timely manner. The [Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program 21E QA](#) provides more information on what actions MassDEP BWSC may take, depending on the level of PFAS detected in your well (below 20 ppt, from 20 to 90 ppt, or 90 ppt and greater).

12. Will the laboratory results of the PFAS testing of selected private wells be made public?

Lab results of all PFAS tests will be provided to the private well owner and MassDEP. In addition, a copy of all results will be provided to the appropriate local board of health. Individual private well owner results will not be automatically provided to the public. Anonymized results with no individual owner information will be used by MassDEP to develop PFAS characterization maps. However, records of laboratory results of PFAS testing are considered public documents and therefore may be made publicly available as per the Massachusetts Public Records Law.

13. Are public water supplies also testing for PFAS?

Yes, under the recently revised MassDEP regulations all public water supplies must test for PFAS. The Baker-Polito Administration secured funding in two supplemental budgets adopted by the Massachusetts Legislature to provide free PFAS analyses for both private wells and public water supplies across the Commonwealth. Information on the free PFAS lab analyses program for public water systems is available in the links below. The information collected from both selected private wells and public water supplies will be used to characterize PFAS levels in the groundwater and surface water of the Commonwealth and inform MassDEP's strategy for treatment and mitigation of this emerging contaminant.

14. Who can I contact for information or technical assistance on free PFAS samples?

Send an email with your questions to pfas-testing@umass.edu or to Program.director-DWP@mass.gov with the Subject: "Private Well PFAS Sampling Program."

For more information, visit:

MassDEP Factsheet on PFAS for Consumers <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

MassDEP Factsheet - PFAS in Private Wells
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-private-well-drinking-water-supplies-faq>

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Factsheet on PFAS <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-drinking-water>

Be Well Informed <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/understanding-my-laboratory-results>

MassDEP Private Well webpage: <https://www.mass.gov/private-wells>

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MassDEP Private Well PFAS Sampling Program

Massachusetts Towns with 60% or More Residents on Private Wells

TOWN	Mass DEP Region	2015 POP	Total Population Served by COMs	Total 2015 Pop NOT Served by COM PWS	% of 2015 Pop NOT Served by COM
ALFORD	1	495	0	495	100%
AQUINNAH	4	328	0	328	100%
ASHBY	2	3,226	0	3,226	100%
BECKET	1	1,762	0	1,762	100%
BERKLEY	4	6,658	0	6,658	100%
BUCKLAND	1	1,864	0	1,864	100%
CHESTERFIELD	1	1,249	0	1,249	100%
CONWAY	1	1,881	0	1,881	100%
FLORIDA	1	730	0	730	100%
HAWLEY	1	331	0	331	100%
HEATH	1	693	0	693	100%
HOLLAND	1	2,506	0	2,506	100%
LEVERETT	1	1,845	0	1,845	100%
LEYDEN	1	713	0	713	100%
MIDDLEFIELD	1	527	0	527	100%
MILLVILLE	2	3,234	0	3,234	100%
MONTGOMERY	1	859	0	859	100%
MOUNT WASHINGTON	1	163	0	163	100%
NEW ASHFORD	1	225	0	225	100%
NEW BRAINTREE	1	1,022	0	1,022	100%
NEW SALEM	1	999	0	999	100%
OAKHAM	2	1,929	0	1,929	100%
OTIS	1	1,576	0	1,576	100%
PELHAM	1	1,330	0	1,330	100%
PERU	1	845	0	845	100%
PETERSHAM	1	1,246	0	1,246	100%
PHILLIPSTON	2	1,747	0	1,747	100%
PLAINFIELD	1	652	0	652	100%
PRINCETON	2	3,470	0	3,470	100%
ROCHESTER	4	5,494	0	5,494	100%
ROWE	1	383	0	383	100%
SAVOY	1	677	0	677	100%
SHUTESBURY	1	1,764	0	1,764	100%
TOLLAND	1	496	0	496	100%
TYRINGHAM	1	325	0	325	100%
WARWICK	1	762	0	762	100%
WASHINGTON	1	535	0	535	100%
WENDELL	1	870	0	870	100%
WEST TISBURY	4	2,896	0	2,896	100%
WESTHAMPTON	1	1,638	0	1,638	100%
WINDSOR	1	895	0	895	100%

MassDEP Private Well PFAS Sampling Program

Massachusetts Towns with 60% or More Residents on Private Wells

TOWN	Mass DEP Region	2015 POP	Total Population Served by COMs	Total 2015 Pop NOT Served by COM PWS	% of 2015 Pop NOT Served by COM
LAKEVILLE	4	11,338	150	11,188	99%
REHOBOTH	4	12,008	164	11,844	99%
CARLISLE	3	5,245	82	5,163	98%
GOSHEN	1	1,070	25	1,045	98%
HUBBARDSTON	2	4,596	120	4,476	97%
RICHMOND	1	1,429	38	1,391	97%
PLYMPTON	4	2,917	80	2,837	97%
SHELBURNE	1	1,848	60	1,788	97%
BOXFORD	3	8,253	271	7,982	97%
SHERBORN	3	4,300	165	4,135	96%
WESTPORT	4	15,814	615	15,199	96%
TRURO	4	2,007	80	1,927	96%
GRANVILLE	1	1,622	75	1,547	95%
BRIMFIELD	1	3,741	195	3,546	95%
CHARLEMONT	1	1,234	66	1,168	95%
HAMPDEN	1	5,223	283	4,940	95%
WALES	1	1,899	105	1,794	94%
BOLTON	2	5,180	385	4,795	93%
CHARLTON	2	13,406	1,012	12,394	92%
MENDON	2	6,024	501	5,523	92%
NEW MARLBOROUGH	1	1,478	140	1,338	91%
CLARKSBURG	1	1,659	180	1,479	89%
SANDISFIELD	1	910	100	810	89%
GRANBY	1	6,352	727	5,625	89%
COLRAIN	1	1,647	253	1,394	85%
STOW	2	7,125	1,239	5,886	83%
DUNSTABLE	2	3,435	598	2,837	83%
FREETOWN	4	9,179	1,600	7,579	83%
BERLIN	2	3,020	590	2,430	80%
ROYALSTON	1	1,274	275	999	78%
CARVER	4	11,629	2,651	8,978	77%
ASHFIELD	1	1,723	400	1,323	77%
MONTEREY	1	948	242	706	74%
BELCHERTOWN	1	14,929	3,929	11,000	74%
ERVING	1	1,776	561	1,215	68%
HARVARD	2	6,573	2,119	4,454	68%
TYNGSBOROUGH	3	12,267	4,082	8,185	67%
SUTTON	2	9,272	3,095	6,177	67%
NEWBURY	3	6,971	2,330	4,641	67%
DOVER	3	5,961	2,158	3,803	64%