



Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides
Secretary

Martin Suuberg
Commissioner

February 10, 2022

Re: MassDEP PFAS Sampling Program Update

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

As you know, in 2019 and 2020 the Baker-Polito Administration sought and received funding from the Legislature to support testing for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water in both public water supplies and selected private wells to assist in characterizing PFAS levels in the Commonwealth. These programs provide the opportunity for PFAS laboratory analyses of samples at no charge from all Public Water Systems and selected private wells.

PFAS Regulation in Massachusetts

On October 2, 2020, MassDEP published its PFAS public drinking water standard of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) (or parts per trillion [ppt]) – for the sum of the concentrations of six specific PFAS, which MassDEP abbreviates as “PFAS6.” This current drinking water standard is set to be protective against adverse health effects for all people consuming the water. The current standard is not applicable to transient non-community systems due to their users limited and transient access to the water. However, MassDEP performs a health assessment on these systems if elevated levels are found. The current drinking water standard complements the PFAS waste site notification and cleanup requirements our Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup established in late December 2019. To review our previous communications about these important regulations see: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/general-introduction-letter-and-private-well-pfas-sampling-program-faq/download>.

Free PFAS Lab Analyses Program for Public Water Suppliers

As of mid-January 2022, there were 1,619 Public Water Systems (PWS) in the Commonwealth. 1,466 have their own water sources and are required to test for PFAS. Those required to test for PFAS include:

- 449 community (COM) systems. A COM system is a public water system that serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.
- 241 non-transient non-community (NTNC) systems. A NTNC system is a public water system that is not a community water system and that has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves at least 25 of the same persons, or more, approximately four or more hours per day, four or more days per week, more than six months, or 180 days per year, such as a workplace providing water to its employees, and;

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

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370

MassDEP Website: www.mass.gov/dep

Printed on Recycled Paper

- 776 transient non-community (TNC) systems. A TNC system is a public water system that is not a community water system or a NTNC water system but is a public water system that has at least 15 service connections or serves water to 25 different persons at least 60 days of the year. Some examples of these types of systems are restaurants, motels, campgrounds, parks, golf courses, ski areas, and community centers.

Testing of PWS for PFAS is widespread, in large part due to the free sampling program initiated by the Baker-Polito administration and currently:

- 64% of the PWS (COMs, NTNCs and TNCs) have signed up for the free sampling program
- 99% of the 449 COM systems have tested their water for PFAS
- 100% of COM and NTNC systems, which were required begin PFAS testing October 1, 2021, have either sampled or are in the process of doing so.
- 41% of the TNCs – which are required to start PFAS sampling by September 30, 2022 - have already tested.

Results of PFAS monitoring are identifying where PFAS detections exist and have resulted in additional treatment of their drinking water for PFAS for some systems:

- 95% of the population are drinking water from systems that meet the current PFAS6 drinking water standard.
- 95% of the total MA population in an EJ community is receiving water currently under 20 ppt.
- 7.7% of PWS have reported providing water to their customers with PFAS6 > 20 ppt. 4.8% are currently providing water to their customers with PFAS6 > 20 ppt.

For up-to-date information on PFAS6 testing and for public water systems response actions, see Tabs 3 and 4 of the public water system storymap. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas#pfas-detected-in-drinking-water-supplies-in-massachusetts->

Grants and Loans for PFAS Treatment Planning, Design, and Interim Response

All systems with PFAS6 over the current MCL are required to address the issue through short- and long-term solutions to ensure their consumers have information and access to alternate sources of water. DEP, the Baker-Polito administration have expanded grant and loan programs to meet this need:

- \$5 million in grants were awarded to 26 PWS for the planning and design of PFAS treatment systems. See Tab 6 of the [storymap on our PFAS webpage](#). The PFAS Treatment Grant Program covers the costs of work associated with reducing or eliminating a public health risk from PFAS6 contamination of public drinking water and achieving PFAS6 levels compliant with the drinking water standard.
- \$1.28 million in grants were awarded to 12 PWS in Round 1 of the Interim PFAS6 Response Grant Program. [Interim PFAS6 Response Program](#). The Interim PFAS6 Response grant program provides funds (including reimbursement for costs and expenses already incurred) to impacted systems for interim public health measures implemented in response to the discovery of PFAS6 contamination in the drinking water supply. \$1 million is available in grants in the Round 2 of the PFAS Interim Response Grants Program. Applications are due on February 1, 2022. Due to the compressed time schedule, Round 2 eligibility is limited to reimbursement only. [Water Resources Grants & Financial Assistance | Mass.gov](#).
- MassDEP and the Clean Water Trust have issued 13 loans or loan commitments at a 0% interest rate for construction projects to address PFAS contamination to 11 PWS for a total of \$104 million. See the [Clean Water Trust webpage](#).
- MassDEP is reviewing applications from 13 PWS for SRF loans for CY 2022 for infrastructure projects to address PFAS. Projects include treatment systems, one water main extension, and 3 carry-over multi-year projects for a total of \$176 million.

- \$3.6 million in federal funding was allocated by the Massachusetts Legislature to 12 Communities to address PFAS contamination in: AN ACT RELATIVE TO IMMEDIATE COVID-19 RECOVERY NEEDS [Session Law - Acts of 2021 Chapter 102 \(malegislature.gov\)](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/Session_Laws/Acts/2021/Chapter102)

Up-to-date information about PFAS sampling, grants and loans is available at:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas#pfas-detected-in-drinking-water-supplies-in-massachusetts->.

Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program

The MassDEP Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program is characterizing PFAS levels in towns that are not predominantly served by Public Water Systems. More than 500,000 residents of Massachusetts are served by private wells. MassDEP is partnering with its contractor, the University of Massachusetts (UMass), to undertake this program.

The program is being delivered in 85 towns where more than 60% of the population is served by private wells. Up to 40 wells in each of these towns are being selected for PFAS drinking water lab analysis. A list of the 85 towns is provided in the updated FAQ at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-massdep-private-wells-pfas-sampling-program/download>.

Within these 85 towns, MassDEP and its partner UMass, work with local Boards of Health, legislative representatives, and other local partners to identify private wells for potential PFAS analysis, based on geographic distribution within the town and proximity to potential sources of PFAS. MassDEP is also working with its partners to conduct outreach to homeowners within the 85 towns.

To date, MassDEP and UMass have invited 71 local Boards of Health and other local officials to meet to discuss the program and is actively sampling in 62 Towns.

- 3,974 owners have applied for participation in the program
- 1,343 homeowners have signed sampling agreement forms and are now sampling/have sampled. This number includes those who have been sent sampling kits.
- We have results from 939 private wells; 94% are below the MCL.
- In 43 of the 62 Towns in which we have tested, all the results have been below the MCL.

MassDEP/the UMass contractor is continuing to work with partners to conduct outreach and encourage application and participation in the program.

There is still testing capacity for interested private well owners in most of the 85 Towns. We encourage you to help spread the word about the program by sharing this Private Wells PFAS Sampling Program infographic via social media or any other means used to connect with residents of your Town, if you are in one of the towns listed in the FAQ:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gMKOwegumJe4GefjttR0vSXTeiC_-zQT

To Stay Up To Date:

For up-to-date information about the private well sampling, see the private well storymap.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-private-well-drinking-water-supplies-faq#pfas-testing-in-private-wells->

For more information about PFAS and MassDEP's efforts to address these contaminants, 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>. If you have further questions, you can contact MassDEP's Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov. Subject: PFAS

A final report on the characterization for PFAS levels in the Commonwealth will be available after June 30, 2022.

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

Note on Cybersecurity: Please read emails carefully and avoid clicking on links from suspicious emails or from contacts you are not familiar with.

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.