

Focus on PFAS

What are PFAS?

PFAS stands for per- and polyfluoralkyl substances.

There are thousands of different chemical combinations and most are extremely stable and persistent in the environment.

PFAS compounds have been commercially manufactured since the 1940's and have been extensively studied since the 1990's.

Many common products such as stain resistant carpet, water repellent clothing, non-stick cookware, and various food packaging items contain PFAS.

PFAS contamination

One major source of PFAS contamination in Washington state is Aqueous Film Forming Foam used for extinguishing petroleum fires and fire training.

PFAS compounds have been found in all environmental media (groundwater, soil, sediments, surface water, etc.), rain water, as well as the blood of humans and animals worldwide.

How are PFAS compounds regulated?

There are no established federal standards for any PFAS compounds. EPA issued groundwater health

advisory levels (HALs) for perfluorooctanoate (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).

HALs are not enforceable, but are used as Preliminary Remediation Goals for federal cleanups.

Ecology recently reviewed state statutes and rules to assess the Washington State's authority to regulate PFAS compounds.

This evaluation concluded that because PFAS compounds meet the definition of persistence under Washington's dangerous waste rules (WAC 173-303-090 or 100) they are hazardous substances.

Next steps

The Washington Department of Health is working on rulemaking to set State Action Levels (SALs) for five PFAS compounds in drinking water. Shortly after they promulgate the SALs, likely in early 2022, Ecology will develop cleanup levels for the same five PFAS compounds.

Related Information

- [PFAS and cleanups](#)¹
- [Learn more about PFAS and health](#)²
- [WA Dept. of Health PFAS rulemaking](#)³



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¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-toxic-chemicals/Addressing-priority-toxic-chemicals/PFAS/cleanup-sites>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/PFAS>

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<https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater/RegulationandCompliance/RuleMaking>