

## Focus on: PFAS Chemical Action Plan



### Chemical Action Plan process

Washington state's departments of Ecology and Health work together to develop chemical action plans (CAPs). CAPs assess the environmental and health impacts of a chemical or class of chemicals, and recommend strategies to reduce or eliminate those impacts. Ecology and Health work with industry, tribes, local governments, and environmental groups in developing the plans.

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### Special accommodations

To request materials in a format for the visually impaired, visit [ecology.wa.gov/accessibility](https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility), call Ecology at 360-407-6700, Relay Service 711, or TTY 877-833-6341.

### Protecting Washington from PFAS

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are [a class of persistent chemicals](#)<sup>1</sup> that are widespread pollutants. PFAS have been found in food, water, people, and the environment.

These synthetic chemicals are used in many consumer products, including food wrappers, fabrics, and carpets. PFAS make these products resistant to water, oil, grease, stains, and heat. Some PFAS have been linked to health problems in people and adverse impacts to wildlife. Through the CAP and associated efforts, Ecology and Health are working to prevent potential exposure to people and the environment from PFAS.

### Why we are concerned about PFAS

Certain PFAS are highly mobile in the environment, meaning they can contaminate groundwater. Some PFAS transform into highly persistent perfluorinated chemicals—no natural processes can break these substances down. Once in the environment, PFAS can contaminate water and bioaccumulate in wildlife. The drinking water supplies in several parts of Washington are contaminated with PFAS above Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory level. They are costly to filter out.

### Draft CAP recommendations

The Draft CAP recommends actions to address a broad range of PFAS concerns. Our recommendations have evolved since we first started developing the CAP in 2016. Over time, as we improved our knowledge of

<sup>1</sup> <http://bit.ly/prioritytoxics-pfas>

## PFAS-related laws and rules in Washington state

### **Packages Containing Metals and Toxics Chemicals Law— Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 70A.222**

Ecology is conducting an alternatives assessment to determine if there are safer alternatives to PFAS used in food packaging.

### **Firefighting Agents and Equipment Law—RCW 70A.400**

PFAS-containing firefighting foam is not allowed to be used for training purposes. Sale of PFAS-containing firefighting foam (with some exemptions) was prohibited starting July 1, 2020.

### **Pollution Prevention for Healthy People and Puget Sound Act—RCW 70A.350**

PFAS is a priority chemical class. Identify consumer products that are significant sources of PFAS exposure. Implement regulatory actions to reduce PFAS exposure to people and sensitive species under the Safer Products for Washington program.

PFAS, and as several pieces of legislation were passed and implemented (see bar to the left), some of our earlier recommendations were acted upon. The following are the recommendations in our [2020 Draft CAP](#).<sup>2</sup>

#### Ensure drinking water is safe

- Identify funding for PFAS drinking water mitigation.
- Provide technical support for PFAS site characterization, source investigation, and mitigation when PFAS are discovered in soil and water above levels of health concern.
- Support biomonitoring and other health studies to answer important health questions.

#### Manage environmental PFAS contamination

- Establish PFAS cleanup levels for soil and groundwater.
- Partner with local organizations in communities with contaminated water or contaminated sites.
- Work to prevent PFAS releases from firefighting foam use and manufacturing.

#### Reduce PFAS in products

- Reduce PFAS exposure from carpet and rugs, stain and water resistance treatments, and leather and textile furnishings.
- Identify additional sources and uses of PFAS to consider in the second [Safer Products for Washington](#)<sup>3</sup> cycle.
- Implement other reduction actions for PFAS in products.

#### Understand and manage PFAS in waste

- Evaluate PFAS in wastewater treatment.
- Evaluate landfill PFAS emissions.
- Evaluate Washington biosolids management.

### **Next steps for the PFAS Chemical Action Plan**

Ecology and Health published a Draft CAP with updated recommendations in late 2020. We will consider the feedback from stakeholders on the Draft CAP as we develop the Final CAP, which we expect to finish in 2021. Learn more on the [PFAS CAP website](#).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/2004035.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ecology.wa.gov/Safer-Products-WA>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias\\_\\_1962/37105/pfas\\_chemical\\_action\\_plan.aspx](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37105/pfas_chemical_action_plan.aspx)