



From the desk of Mayor Scott Galvin  
City of Woburn, Massachusetts

## Important Information for all Consumers Receiving Drinking Water from Our System

Woburn Water Department has  
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) above the Drinking Water Standard

### What is Woburn Doing About PFAS?

The City of Woburn has submitted short-term and long-term corrective action plans to MassDEP, which have been reviewed and conceptually approved. This includes the following actions, to provide our customers with quality drinking water:



- A free water bottle filling station is available at the Senior Center on School Street.



- For people considered in a sensitive population who must purchase bottled water, the City will issue a monthly rebate for the water bill to be issued in February 2023 for the billing period of July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. MassDEP defines sensitive populations as pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants and people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system. The rebate will be available for those periods we are non-compliant with the MassDEP drinking water standard of 20 ppt. Qualifying Residents can apply for the rebate on the City website beginning in January of 2023 <https://www.woburnma.gov/news/2022/02/bottled-water-rebate-program/>



- We are upgrading our water treatment plant to treat and remove PFAS6. The initial engineering studies are complete and we are now underway with the design.



- We submitted an application for funding to the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund on August 12 to cover the cost to construct the upgrades to our water treatment plant.



- Continue to routinely sample our treated water and our individual source wells for PFAS6.



- Provide regular updates on the levels detected in our water supply.

***Please contact Mayor Galvin at 781-897-5901  
with questions or for more information***

# Woburn Water Department has Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) above the Drinking Water Standard

## What Happened?

Our water system had a PFAS6 result that exceeded the PFAS6 MCL drinking water standard for the period July through September 2022. We are currently working to implement additional treatment to address PFAS6 levels currently exceeding the MCL and ensure the safety of our water supply.

## What Does This Mean?

*This is not an emergency.* If it had been, you would have been notified within 24 hours. Although this is not an emergency, as our customer, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did and are doing to correct this situation.

## What PFAS Levels Have Been Detected in Your Drinking Water?

On October 2, 2020, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) promulgated a drinking water regulation and maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) for the sum of six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (called PFAS6). A nanogram per liter (abbreviated as “ng/L”) is equivalent to a part per trillion (abbreviated as “ppt”).

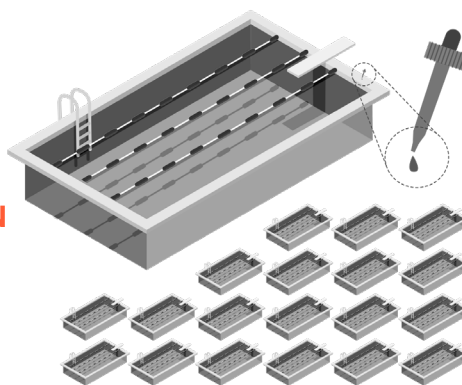
See our latest results in the table below.

PFAS6 Results – Water Treatment Plant					
Quarterly Compliance Period	Monitoring Period	Sampling Dates	PFAS6 Result (ppt)*	‡Quarterly Average (ppt)	PFAS6 MCL (ppt)
Quarter 3 2022	Month 1	7/27/22	Sample Result Invalidated	22	20
	Month 2	8/10/22	20.6		
	Month 3	9/1/22	23.9		
	Month 4	9/23/22	21.3		

\* For reference, a “part per trillion” or “ppt” is a microscopic measurement for substances in the water and is equivalent to a single drop of water in the combined water volume of 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

‡ If any sample result would cause the quarterly average to exceed the MCL, the PFAS6 MCL has been violated.

**1 part per trillion  
(ppt)  
IS EQUIVALENT TO  
A SINGLE DROP OF WATER IN  
20 Olympic-sized  
swimming pools**



Our results are above the MCL for PFAS6. The average of the three samples collected in the third quarter of 2022 is 22 ppt, which is above the MassDEP drinking water Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 20 ppt. Even though we have been notifying you of our results since we began collecting samples, to comply with the new drinking water regulations, we must provide you with this public notice. An MCL is the maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water which is delivered to any user of a public water system.

Some people who drink water containing these PFAS in excess of the MCL may experience certain adverse effects. These could include effects on the liver, blood, immune system, thyroid, and fetal development. These PFAS may also elevate the risk of certain cancers.

## What is PFAS6?

PFAS6 includes perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA) and perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA). PFAS are human-made chemicals that have been used in the manufacturing of certain fire-fighting foams, moisture and stain resistant products, and other industrial processes.

## What are PFAS and How are People Exposed to Them?

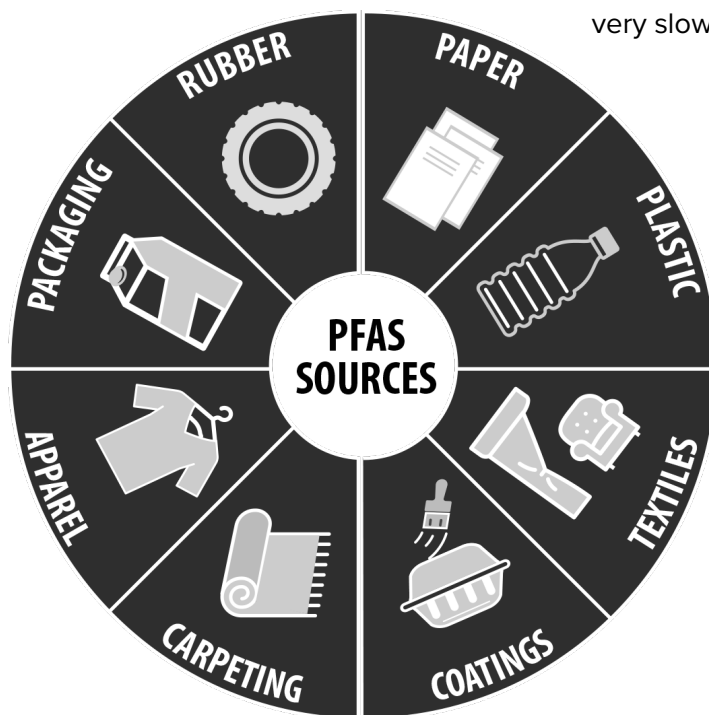
PFAS are fluorinated organic chemicals. Two PFAS compounds, PFOA and PFOS have been the most extensively produced and studied of these compounds. Many PFAS compounds were used in common consumer products such as stain repellents, nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing, water-resistant food wrappers and containers, and many others. PFAS are contained in firefighting foams, which have been used in training exercises and to extinguish oil and gas fires at a variety of locations including airfields and military installations.

Most uses of PFAS compounds were phased out 10 to 15 years ago and replaced with other compounds that are thought to pose fewer health risks. However, because PFAS were used in many consumer products, most people have been exposed to them.

While consumer products and food are the largest source of exposure to these chemicals for most people, drinking water can be an additional source of exposure in communities where these chemicals have contaminated water supplies. Such contamination is typically localized and associated with a specific facility, for example, an airfield where they were used for firefighting or a facility where PFAS were produced or used. However, as is the situation in Woburn, very low levels of human-made PFAS compounds are also found in drinking water supplies without a known source of contamination, as PFAS degrade very slowly and are commonly found in groundwater and soils.

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**PFAS are also used in several industrial processes and used to manufacture consumer products that are resistant to water, grease, or stains.**



## What Should I Do?

Consumers in a sensitive subgroup (pregnant or nursing women, infants, and people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system):

- Are advised not to consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ppt.
- Are advised to use bottled water for drinking and cooking of foods that absorb water (like pasta).
- For infant formula, use bottled water or use formula that does not require adding water.
- Bottled water should only be used if it has been tested. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires companies licensed to sell or distribute bottled water or carbonated non-alcoholic beverages to test for PFAS. See [www.mass.gov/info-details/water-quality-standards-for-bottled-water-in-massachusetts#list-of-bottlers-](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/water-quality-standards-for-bottled-water-in-massachusetts#list-of-bottlers-)

*For all other consumers not in a sensitive subgroup:*

- If you are not in a sensitive subgroup, you may continue to consume the water because the 20 ppt value is applicable to a lifetime consuming the water and shorter duration exposures present less risk.
- If you have specific health concerns regarding your past exposure, you should see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) link [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html) and consult a health professional, such as your doctor.

*Steps you can take to reduce your intake:*

Consider taking the following steps while actions are being implemented to address this issue:

- For older children and adults (not in a sensitive subgroup), the 20 ppt value is applicable to a lifetime of consuming the water. For these groups, shorter duration exposures present less risk. However, if you are concerned about your exposure while steps are being taken to assess and lower the PFAS6 concentration in the drinking water, use of bottled water will reduce your exposure.
- Home water treatment systems that are certified to remove PFAS by an independent testing group such as NSF, UL, or the Water Quality Association may be effective in treating the water. These may include point of entry systems, which treat all the water entering a home, or point of use devices, which treat water where it is used, such as at a faucet. For information on selecting home treatment devices that are effective in treating the water for PFAS6 see weblinks listed in this document.
- In most situations, the water can be safely used for washing foods, brushing teeth, bathing, and showering.

**Please note: Boiling the water will not destroy PFAS6 and will somewhat increase its level due to evaporation of some of the water.**

▶ See **"Where Can You Get More Information?"** for links and more details from the City and other resources

**Where Can You Get More Information?** Learn more about the City of Woburn's water and the steps we are taking, or for the Massachusetts PFAS drinking water regulations, please visit:



**City of Woburn website:**

[www.woburnma.gov/government/water-department/pfas/](http://www.woburnma.gov/government/water-department/pfas/)



**MassDEP factsheet:**

[www.woburnma.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/PFAS-FAQs.pdf](http://www.woburnma.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/PFAS-FAQs.pdf)

*Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses).*

**QUESTIONS?** You may also find more information on PFAS from the following sources:

- City of Woburn Water Department  
<https://www.woburnma.gov/government/water-department/pfas/>
- MassDEP Fact Sheet - Questions and Answers for Consumers (<https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351>)
- CDC ATSDR Information on PFAS for consumers and health professionals (<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>)
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health information about PFAS in Drinking Water  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-drinking-water>

**This public notice provides important information regarding your drinking water. Please translate it or speak with someone who understands it or ask the contact listed below for a translation.**



**Date Distributed:  
October 2022**

### **City of Woburn Water Department**

Anthony Blazejowski

5 Cove Street | Woburn, MA 01801

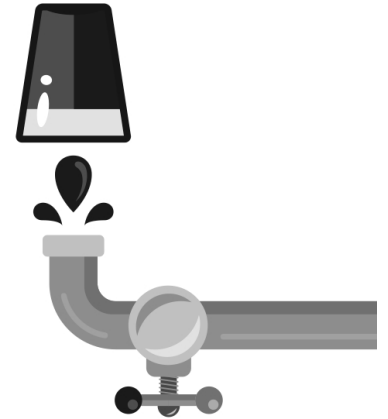
Ph: 781-897-5945 | Email: [ablazejowski@cityofwoburn.com](mailto:ablazejowski@cityofwoburn.com)

**This notice is being sent to you by:**

**PWS Name:** City of Woburn Water Department

**PWS ID#:** 3347000

Drinking Water  
About Your  
**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**



Mayor's Office  
CITY OF WOBURN  
10 Common Street  
Woburn, MA 01801

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