

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

This report contains important information about your drinking water. Please translate it or speak with someone who understands it or ask the contact listed below for a translation.

Ayer DPW Water Division located in Ayer, Massachusetts has levels of PFAS6 above the Drinking Water Standard

What happened?

Our water system recently received notification of PFAS6 results showing that **our system violated the 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) PFAS6 Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) drinking water standard during the January – March 2021 compliance period with a quarterly average of 26 ng/L.** Samples collected at our Spectacle Pond WTP during this compliance period reported levels of PFAS6 between 23.88 and 28.12 ng/L.

The location where elevated levels of PFAS6 were reported is one of two water treatment plants that supplies drinking water to our system. PFAS6 levels were reported below the 20 ng/L MCL at our Grove Pond WTP, which has treatment for the removal of PFAS6.

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 are doing to correct this situation.

On October 2, 2020, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) promulgated a new 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). An MCL is the maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water which is delivered to any user of a public water system. Our results are above the MCL for PFAS6. ***Some people who drink water containing PFAS6 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 PFAS6 may also elevate the risk of certain cancers.*** For more information on PFAS, see the links below.

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 man-made chemicals that have been used in the manufacturing of certain fire-fighting foams, moisture and stain resistant products, food packaging and other industrial processes.

What should I do?

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

- **Consumers in a sensitive subgroup are advised not to consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ng/L.**
- **Consumers in a sensitive subgroup** 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.** A list of companies that voluntarily tested their water for PFAS and shared the results can be found on MassDEP's website at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/bottled-water-tested-for-pfas>.

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 20 ng/L 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 below 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 ng/L 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 attached MassDEP factsheet and weblinks listed below.
- **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.

What is being done?

Our water system has taken the following pro-active measures:

- We will continue to sample our water sources, treatment plants and distribution system for PFAS.
- We have completed construction of a PFAS treatment system at the Grove Pond Wellfield and are removing the PFAS to below detectable levels.
- We are in the process of installing PFAS treatment at the Spectacle Pond WTP to reduce the levels of PFAS6 below the MCL. This should be in operation by the end of this year.
- When additional information becomes available, this public notice will be updated. We also post updates and information on the Town Web Site <https://www.ayer.ma.us/water-department/pages/pfas-drinking-water>.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, please contact Mark Wetzel, P.E., Superintendent of Public Works at 978-772-8240, mwetzel@ayer.ma.us, Ayer DPW 25 Brook St Ayer, MA 01432.

We will provide public notice updates every three months until the situation has been resolved.

Additional information can be found in the **attached factsheet** and weblinks listed below.

- **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 notice is being sent to you by:

Town of Ayer

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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). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.