

## TOWN of AYER - WATER DIVISION

### Important Information for all consumers receiving Drinking Water from our system

-- Translate it or speak with someone who understands it --

**Important Notice:** This notice provides important information regarding your drinking water and contaminants known as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). While the most recent sampling results for this Public Water System showed PFAS in the system, they were below the current health guidelines established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). This notice is intended to provide current information concerning MassDEP's efforts to address PFAS in drinking water and provide health protective guidelines.

#### MassDEP PFAS Update Information

The EPA in 2016 published a drinking water Health Advisory Level for two of the PFAS compounds (Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)) combined at 0.070 micrograms per liter (ug/L) or 70 parts per trillion (ppt). In June 2018, MassDEP issued an Office of Research and Standards guideline (ORSG) for drinking water of 70 ppt for PFOA, PFOS, PFNA (Perfluorononanoic acid), PFHxS (Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid) and PFHpA (Perfluoroheptanoic acid) combined. The three additional PFAS were included because they share very similar chemical structures and the available data indicates they are likely to exhibit similar toxicities. The ORSG was established to be protective against adverse health effects for all people consuming the water for a lifetime and is also applicable to shorter-term exposures of weeks to months during pregnancy and breast-feeding.

Based on the current ORSG, MassDEP has recommended that:

- 1) consumers in sensitive subgroups (pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants) not consume water when the level of the five PFAS substances, individually or in combination, is above 70 ppt; and,
- 2) public water suppliers take steps expeditiously to lower levels of the five PFAS, individually or in combination, to below 70 ppt for all consumers.

As part of the agency's efforts to address PFAS compounds, MassDEP has continued to review the current scientific information, studies and assessments on PFAS.

Based on this evaluation, MassDEP is undertaking the following actions:

- 1) MassDEP is proposing draft amendments to the Massachusetts hazardous waste cleanup regulations (the Massachusetts Contingency Plan or "MCP"), that include groundwater and soil cleanup standards. Consistent with the proposed ORSG level described below, the proposed Method 1 GW-1 Standard – applicable to groundwater protected for its current and/or future use as drinking water – is 20 ppt for the 5 compounds noted above plus Perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA)(6 total).
- 2) MassDEP's Office of Research and Standards is convening its Health Effects Advisory Committee to provide scientific input on the technical basis of the proposed MCP standards and their implication regarding a potential revised ORSG with a limit of 20 ppt for the sum of the 6 PFAS compounds.
- 3) MassDEP also recently initiated the process to develop a drinking water standard for public drinking water systems, known as a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL), for the six PFAS compounds. Information on this effort, including information on stakeholder meetings, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/development-of-a-pfas-drinking-water-standard-mcl>.

MassDEP is accepting comment on the draft MCP regulations, including the proposed PFAS standards. *Any comments received on the proposed MCP GW-1 standard* will also be considered by the Department in the revision of the ORSG and the development of the MCL.

### ***What PFAS Levels have been detected in your drinking water, and what should you do?***

Samples collected at the Spectacle Pond and Grove Pond Water Treatment Facilities on February 20, 2019 showed levels of **32 and 48 ppt** respectively, for the following five PFAS: PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS and PFHpA. The level of PFDA in these samples was reported as 0 ppt.

These results are below EPA's and MassDEP's current health advisory guidelines. However, they are above the proposed 20 ppt limit under consideration by MassDEP. If you are a sensitive consumer (pregnant women, nursing mothers, and infants) you can minimize your exposure by using bottled water that has been tested for PFAS for drinking, making infant formula and cooking of foods that absorb water or use a home water treatment system that is certified to remove PFAS by an independent testing group such as National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), Water Quality Association or the CSA Group. See MassDEP PFAS Factsheet for more information <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/04/17/pfas-in-dw-fs.pdf>

Boiling water will not destroy PFAS and will somewhat increase their levels due to evaporation of some of the water. As PFAS compounds are not well absorbed through the skin, you may safely use the water for bathing and showering. If you are concerned about your exposure, even though the risk is very low, you may want to use bottled water for brushing your teeth and cleaning items like dentures, pacifiers, and fruits and vegetables. If you have specific health concerns regarding your exposure, you may want to consult a health professional, such as your doctor.

### ***What is our water system doing?***

Our system has taken the following actions:

- The water supply well with the highest PFAS levels (Grove Pond Well No. 8) was removed from service in February 2018. We are in the process of installing a temporary carbon filter on this well to remove the PFAS.
- The treated water combined for the other wells at the entrance points to the distribution system (Grove Pond WTP and Spectacle Pond WTP) are sampled quarterly and are below MassDEP's current ORSG.
- We have completed the design of a state of the art treatment facility at Grove Pond to remove PFAS from the water. This will begin construction this summer and completed next spring.
- We are designing a second state of the art treatment facility for the Spectacle Pond Wellfield.
- While actions are being implemented to lower the PFAS concentration in our water, Ayer is testing a Point of Use filter. If the filter can demonstrate that it effectively removes PFAS to below the MassDEP ORSG, we will provide filters, upon request, to the sensitive population.
- We are also investigating the source of the PFAS with assistance from MassDEP.

### ***What are PFAS and how are people exposed to them?***

PFAS are fluorinated organic chemicals. Two PFAS chemicals, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) have been the most extensively produced and studied of these chemicals. 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. PFAS are also used in a number of industrial processes and have been used to manufacture carpets, clothing, fabrics for furniture, paper packaging for food and other materials (e.g., nonstick cookware) that are resistant to water, grease or stains. Because these chemicals have been 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 at which they were used for firefighting or a facility where these chemicals were produced or used.

***Where can I get more information?***

For more information on what our system is doing about this situation, please contact Mark Wetzel, DPW Superintendent at Phone # 978-772-8240, email address: [mwetzel@ayer.ma.us](mailto:mwetzel@ayer.ma.us) Ayer DPW, 25 Brook Street, Ayer, MA 01432.

You can also get more information on PFAS from the following sources:

MassDEP Fact Sheet – PFAS in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers for Consumers

- MassDEP Fact Sheet – PFAS in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers for Consumers found at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-fact-sheet-pfas-in-drinking-water-questions-and-answers-for-consumers>
- USEPA's Drinking Water Health Advisories can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Statement for PFOS and PFOA can be found at: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>
- For additional information on possible health effects, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Research and Standards, at 617-556-1165.

*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.*

This notice is being sent to you by:

**Town of Ayer Department of Public Works**

**PWS ID#: 2019000**

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