

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Essex Fells water system has levels of perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) above a drinking water standard.

Our water system recently violated a New Jersey drinking water standard. As our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we have already done and are doing to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of federal and state regulated drinking water contaminants. New Jersey adopted a maximum contaminant level (MCL), for PFOA in 2020 and monitoring began in 2021. The MCL for PFOA is 0.014 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) (or 14 parts per trillion) and is based on a running annual average (RAA), in which the four most recent quarters of monitoring data are averaged.

We previously notified you in a letter dated December 15, 2021, that based on samples collected in the four quarters of 2021, the RAA for the fourth quarter 2021 exceeded the MCL for PFOA at our active treatment plant TP001001. As noted in the previous letter, in order to reduce the level of PFOA in the current water supply to below 14 parts per trillion, we have taken two of our three treatment plants (TP003020 and TP002015) offline and removed from service those wells serving TP001001 that had caused PFOA levels in excess of the MCL.

On January 28, 2022 we received notice that the sample collected in the first quarter of 2022 for the treatment plant that remains in service (TP001001) showed that our system continues to exceed the PFOA MCL based on the RAA. The RAA for PFOA based on samples collected over the last year is of 0.016 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (16 parts per trillion). However, the individual sample result for the first quarter 2022 value is 0.0137 $\mu\text{g/L}$ (13.7 parts per trillion).

The first quarter 2022 PFOA value, the RAA based on samples collected during the past four quarters, and the current status of each treatment plant are summarized in the table below.

Treatment Plant (TP)	Most Recent Sample Collection Date	First Quarter PFOA Value	Running Annual Average	Current Status of TP
TP001001	1-11-2022	0.0137 $\mu\text{g/L}$	0.016 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Online and in service and undergoing treatment design.
TP003020	7-21-2021	n/a	0.022 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Offline as of 9-24-2021 and undergoing treatment design.
TP002015	7-21-2021	n/a	0.016 $\mu\text{g/L}$	Offline as of 9-24-2021 and undergoing treatment design.

We are required to keep you informed of the status of any treatment plant with a PFOA MCL violation even if it has been shut off and is no longer delivering water, as the violation still persists. That is why TP003020 and TP002015 are listed in the above table, even though they are presently offline.

Pursuant to NJ Department of Environmental Protection regulations, we will re-issue a notice to you quarterly until we have taken permanent remedial action and our RAAs are below the MCL.

What is PFOA?

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) is a member of the group of chemicals called polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), used as a processing aid in the manufacture of fluoropolymers used in non-stick cookware and other products, as well as other commercial and industrial uses, based on its resistance to harsh chemicals and high temperatures. PFOA has also been used in aqueous film-forming foams for firefighting and training, and it is found in consumer products such as stain-resistant coatings for upholstery and carpets, water-resistant outdoor clothing, and grease proof food packaging. Major sources of PFOA in drinking water include discharge from industrial facilities where it was made or used and the release of aqueous film-forming foam. Although the use of PFOA has decreased substantially, contamination is expected to continue indefinitely because it is extremely persistent in the environment and is soluble and mobile in water.

What does this mean?

People who drink water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL could, over time, experience problems with their blood serum cholesterol levels, liver, kidney, immune system, or, in males, the reproductive system. Drinking water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time may also increase the risk of testicular and kidney cancer. For females, drinking water containing PFOA in excess of the MCL over time may cause developmental delays in a fetus and/or an infant. Some of these developmental effects may persist through childhood.

For additional information regarding PFOA, including fact sheets and answers to frequently asked questions, please refer to the following resources from the NJ Department of Health, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and Essex Fells:

- https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf and
- <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/supporting-documents-drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
- www.essexfellsboro.com/pages/pfoa

What should I do?

- If you have specific health concerns, a severely compromised immune system, have an infant, are pregnant, or are elderly, you may be at higher risk than other individuals and should seek advice from your health care providers about drinking this water.
- The New Jersey Department of Health advises that infant formula and other beverages for infants, such as juice, should be prepared with bottled water when PFOA is elevated in drinking water.
- Pregnant, nursing, and women considering having children may choose to use bottled water for drinking and cooking to reduce exposure to PFOA.
- Other people may also choose to use bottled water for drinking and cooking to reduce exposure to PFOA or a home water filter that is certified to reduce levels of PFOA. Home water treatment devices are available that can reduce levels of PFOA. For more specific information regarding the effectiveness of home water filters for reducing PFOA, visit the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) International website, <http://www.nsf.org/>.
- Boiling your water will not remove PFOA.

For more information, see <https://www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/pfas/> or <https://www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pdf/pfoa-pfos-faq.pdf>

What is being done?

As indicated above, since September 24, 2021 Essex Fells has shut down two treatment plants and several of our water supply wells with higher concentrations of PFOA. We have also adjusted operational protocols, including the manner in which we blend our water sources that remain in service, in order to reduce the overall level of PFOA being delivered to our customers. As a result of these steps, Essex Fells is currently supplying water that is below the 0.014 µg/L MCL for PFOA and meets all other water quality standards. The Borough of Essex Fells has engaged the services of a professional engineering firm to design PFAS treatment facilities that will remove the PFOA contaminants in our water supply on a permanent basis. We are in the process of finalizing the project details, including the cost, with the engineers, contractors and other professionals. We anticipate these permanent treatment facilities will be completed by April 2023.

To view all the drinking water quality data collected by the Essex Fells visit https://www9.state.nj.us/DEP/WaterWatch_public/index.jsp and enter NJ0706001 for the PWSID.

For more information, please contact William Ryden at 973-887-2270 or wryden@anderson-denzler.com.

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 Essex Fells Water Depart., Water System ID#: NJ0706001.

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