



# Topsfield Water Department PFAS Detection Notification

*This material contains important information about your drinking water. Please share this information with 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). Please translate it, speak with someone who understands it or ask the contact listed below for a translation. This advisory document provides information and guidance based upon requirements and recommendations of the MassDEP.*

## PFAS detected in our water

On October 2, 2020, the 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.

The Topsfield Water Department has been testing for PFAS monthly since July 2020. Some samples taken during this time frame had slightly elevated levels of PFAS6. **We are required to provide these materials to make you aware of the elevated levels so you can make informed decisions about your drinking water.**

The Topsfield Water Department has not violated the drinking water regulations. A violation occurs when the average of all samples taken during a quarter exceed the MCL of 20 nanograms per Liter (ng/L) or 20 parts per trillion (ppt). You will receive a formal notice if this occurs. The most recent PFAS results are detailed below:



Fourth Quarter 2020 PFAS6 Results			
Location of Sample	Month	Result (ng/L)	MCL (ng/L)
Boston Street Water Treatment Plant <i>Entry point (treated water entering distribution system)</i>	October	21.42	20
	November	19.81	
	December	16.63 <sup>a</sup>	

<sup>a</sup> Two samples were taken on the same day and sent to two different laboratories. The preliminary result shown is the average of the two tests. Due to the complexity of the testing method these results will not become official until reviewed and approved by MassDEP.

## 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 manufacturing of certain fire-fighting foams, moisture and stain resistant products, and other industrial processes.

## What are the health effects of PFAS6?

Some people who drink water containing PFAS6 in excess of the MCL may experience certain adverse effects, including the liver, blood, immune system, thyroid, and fetal development. These PFAS6 may also elevate the risk of certain cancers.

## 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) you are advised:

- Do not consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ng/L.
- Use bottled water for cooking of foods that absorb water (like pasta).
- Use bottled water for infant formula 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* - You may continue to consume the water because 20 ng/L value is applicable to a life-time consuming the water and shorter duration exposures present less risk.

If you have specific health concerns regarding your past exposure, you should see the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's link below and consult a health professional, such as your doctor.

## Steps you can take to reduce your exposure

Consider taking the following steps while we monitor, assess and address PFAS6:

- 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 address PFAS6 concentrations in the water, use of bottled water (as long as it contains less PFAS6) 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 include point-of-entry systems, which will treat all the water entering a home, or point-of-use devices, which treat water where it is used, such as a faucet. For more information on selecting home treatment devices that are effective in treating the water for PFAS6 see the MassDEP fact sheet and web links 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.**

## Can our new treatment plant remove PFAS6?

Our greensand filtration plant cannot remove PFAS6 as it is currently configured. However, it can be expanded, at a capital expense, to remove PFAS by adding new filter vessels containing granular activated carbon and/or ion exchange resins.

The current facility was designed to remove iron & manganese and further reduce lead and copper corrosion of home plumbing materials. The plant's design incorporates a number of features that were included to meet potential future needs such as arsenic removal, stricter filtration requirements and longer disinfection contact times. PFAS treatment was not included because testing conducted in 2014 indicated PFAS concentrations were below detectable limits at that time. The plant was built and being commissioned when MassDEP announced their intent to regulate PFAS6 in January 2019 and the requirements did not take effect until October of 2020.

## What is being done?

The following steps are being taken to address this issue:

- Our water is being tested on a monthly basis to monitor PFAS6 concentrations.
- The test results are being verified by multiple laboratories to ensure accuracy.
- A grant application was submitted to MassDEP requesting funding to pilot test various PFAS removal technologies during the spring of 2021. We expect to hear if the grant was awarded in January or early February of 2021.
- Our 5-year Capital Plan has been modified to include potential capital expenses tied to PFAS.
- The Town is working closely with MassDEP to understand and consider possible means to address elevated levels.
- You will receive PFAS information, much like this document, on a quarterly basis until further notice. Additional information concerning PFAS is being added to our website.

We have scheduled a public meeting so residents can ask questions and obtain more information from Town & MassDEP staff. The meeting will be held via Zoom on February 10, 2021 at 6:30 PM (Meeting ID: 844 9933 6261 Passcode: 425733). Please visit our website - [www.topsfieldpublicworks.org](http://www.topsfieldpublicworks.org) or contact the Water Department at (978) 887-1517 for more details.

## For more information

Please contact Greg Krom, Water Superintendent at (978) 887-1517, [gkrom@topsfield-ma.gov](mailto:gkrom@topsfield-ma.gov) or 279 Boston Street, Topsfield, MA 01983 if you have any questions. Additional information concerning PFAS is available on our website - <https://www.topsfieldpublicworks.org>. Testing data for PFAS6, along with other data, are regularly posted on our water quality site: <https://www.topsfieldpublicworks.org/apps/watertesting/>.

These state and federal resources are also available:

- MassDEP Fact Sheet - Questions and Answers for Consumers - <https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351>
- MassDEP Fact Sheet - Home Water Treatment Devices - Point of Entry and Point of Use Drinking Water Treatment - <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/home-water-treatment-devices-point-of-entry-and-point-of-use-drinking-water>
- 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>