



The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) defines a water contaminant as any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substance or matter in water. The law enables the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set legal limits on the levels of certain contaminants in drinking water.

The SDWA sets a process that the EPA must follow to develop the national primary drinking water standards intended to control the level of contaminants in the nation's drinking water. The EPA currently has drinking water regulations for more than 90 contaminants.

Following years of scientific testing and evaluation, in February 2021, EPA implemented the national primary drinking water regulation development process for two PFAS contaminants, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS). PFAS stands for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a group of thousands of man-made chemical compounds in use since the 1940s to make products resistant to high temperatures, water, and stains.

PFOA and PFOS are two PFAS compounds believed to have adverse health effects at very low concentrations. Because of these properties, PFOA and PFOS were phased out of production by U.S. manufacturers in the mid-2000s. However, PFOA and PFOS can still be imported into the U.S. through consumer goods. They also remain in some drinking water sources due to decades of industrial pollution and consumer product use. The EPA has stated that approximately 80% of a person's exposure to PFAS comes from consumer goods such as cookware, cosmetics, food wrappings, stain/water-resistant clothing, and carpet and furniture treatments.

March 14, 2023, the EPA announced its proposed national drinking water standards – also known as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) – for PFOA and PFOS. The announcement now starts public comment and scientific review processes that will take place over the next several months. After these processes are complete, the EPA's final drinking water standards may differ from the proposed MCLs announced today.

Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) were also announced. It is important to note the difference between an MCL and an MCLG. An MCL is an enforceable drinking water standard. An MCLG is NOT a drinking water standard; it is a public health goal. The EPA defines an MCLG as the maximum level of a contaminant in drinking water at which no known or anticipated adverse effect on the health of persons would occur.

When EPA issues the final MCLs later this year, it will also announce an effective date set in the future so water providers have time to meet the new standards. The effective date for the final PFOA and PFOS MCLs is still to be determined.

The proposed MCLs announced today – 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOA and 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOS – are above the levels found during a range of tests from water supplied by Lancaster County Water and Sewer District's Catawba River Water Treatment Plant

conducted in accordance with current federal and state regulations. We are providing a range of results because PFAS test results can vary over time and depending upon the testing method.

Our range of results for PFOA are 2.6-3.1 parts per trillion. Our range of results for PFOS are 2.6-3.3 parts per trillion. These tests were conducted in 2020 using USEPA method 537.1 and method 533.

It is important to repeat that the proposed PFOA and PFOS MCLs are not enforceable drinking water standards at this time.

The EPA must follow the entire regulatory development process before the proposed MCLs become the final standards water utilities must meet. For more information about how the EPA determines their proposed and final PFOA and PFOS MCLs, we invite you to visit their website: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/press-releases-related-pfas>

In the meantime, starting in 2023 and running through 2025, Lancaster County Water & Sewer District will join with thousands of other water providers across the country to test for PFOA, PFOS, and 27 other PFAS compounds under the EPA's Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, also known as UCMR 5.

UMCR 5 testing is intended to give the EPA and water providers a greater understanding of how pervasive PFAS are in our nation's drinking water. As directed under UCMR 5, Lancaster County Water and Sewer District will make our results publicly available and publish our findings in our water quality reports.

The EPA recommends public water systems that find PFOA or PFOS in their drinking water take steps to inform customers, undertake additional sampling to assess the level, scope, and source of contamination, and examine steps to limit exposure. That is what Lancaster County Water and Sewer District will do.

The Catawba River Water Treatment Plant already utilizes Powder Activated Carbon (PAC) to treat drinking water for taste and odor. PAC is one of several recommended treatment alternatives to meet the expected MCLs for removal of these subject contaminants.

Lancaster County Water & Sewer District will review our UCMR 5 testing results to determine if additional courses of action are necessary. Meanwhile, we will continue to operate as we always have, as a protector of public health that delivers high-quality drinking water to your taps.