



April 10, 2024

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) enables the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set legal limits on the levels of specific contaminants in drinking water.

On April 10, 2024, the EPA announced national drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS, two specific members of a group of thousands of chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, PFAS for short. PFAS are widely used, completely man-made compounds that break down very slowly over time.

EPA finalized a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) establishing legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water. PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, and HFPO-DA as contaminants with individual MCLs, and PFAS mixtures containing at least two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS using a Hazard Index MCL to account for the combined and co-occurring levels of these PFAS in drinking water. EPA also finalized health-based, non-enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) for these PFAS.

Compound	Final MCLG	Final MCL (enforceable levels)
PFOA	Zero	4.0 parts per trillion (ppt) (also expressed as ng/L)
PFOS	Zero	4.0 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt	10 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt	10 ppt
HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX Chemicals)	10 ppt	10 ppt
Mixtures containing two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS	1 (unitless) Hazard Index	1 (unitless) Hazard Index

**The final rule requires:**

- Public water systems must monitor for these PFAS and have three years to complete initial monitoring (by 2027), followed by ongoing compliance monitoring. Water systems must also provide the public with information on the levels of these PFAS in their drinking water beginning in 2027.
- Public water systems have five years (by 2029) to implement solutions that reduce these PFAS if monitoring shows that drinking water levels exceed these MCLs.
- Beginning in five years (2029), public water systems that have PFAS in drinking water which violates one or more of these MCLs must take action to reduce levels of these PFAS in their drinking water and must provide notification to the public of the violation.

While these drinking water standards do not take effect until 2029, Lancaster County Water & Sewer District (LCWSD) wants our customers to be informed about the EPA's regulatory process, the levels found in our drinking water, and the steps we will be taking to address the issue.

A person's exposure to PFAS can vary due to several factors; they've been used in millions of ways since the 1940s because of their resistance to heat, water, and stains. Teflon - the most famous PFAS - was first used on pans in 1961, starting more than 60 years of consumer use.

The EPA estimates that 80% of a typical person's PFAS exposure comes from consumer products such as cookware, cosmetics, food wrappings, stain and water-resistant clothing, and carpet and furniture treatments. They are also in deodorants, contact lenses, dental floss, toilet paper, and feminine products. People can also be exposed to PFAS by eating foods containing them, especially fish.

The EPA estimates that 20% of a person's exposure to PFAS comes from drinking water. We want you to know Lancaster County Water & Sewer District does not produce or use a single drop of PFAS in our treatment processes, and they have been found in the air, drinking water sources, and rainwater.

For LCWSD, the EPA's drinking water standards are above the levels found during tests we have conducted in our distribution system. Our range of results for PFOA in our distribution system 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.

LCWSD's Catawba River Water Treatment Plant has also recently completed testing of the raw water from our Catawba River source. Our range of results for PFOA in our source raw water are 2.5-4.8 parts per trillion. Our range of results for PFOS in our source raw water are 2.2-4.0 parts per trillion. These three (3) tests were conducted between August 2020 and January 2024 using USEPA method 537.1.

Starting in 2023 and running through 2025, Lancaster County Water & Sewer District has joined 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. UCMR 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 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. Now that the USEPA has established a final rule and a compliance

schedule, LCWSD will review our UCMR 5 testing results as well as acquiring additional raw water and distribution system testing results to study and determine additional courses of action as 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.