

Acton Water District – Summer 2020 WaterWords Notice

To our Valued Customers and Community Members,

We hope that you, your families, and colleagues are doing well during this time of COVID-19, quarantine, and disruptions to daily life. The Acton Water District has been preparing for a pandemic on paper and in simulations for many years and was able to press into action during late March to keep our staff safe, healthy and able to continue to serve the community. Although some work has been delayed and processes have changed or take longer to deliver, we have largely been able to keep the water flowing with minimal inconvenience to our customers. Thank you for abiding by our lawn watering restriction as we move towards resuming normal operations.

For some of you this will be your first time receiving our Summer *WaterWords* Newsletter, which includes notice of our Annual Consumer Confidence Report. You may find the summary of water quality data during 2019 at www.actonwater.com/ccr. For others, you will notice it is in a different format and will feature different information. This is a Public Notice, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and is being sent to all postal patrons in Acton even though you may not receive water from the Acton Water District. If you have questions on the water being supplied to your home or business, please check our website at www.actonwater.com/pfas for contact information of other water suppliers from whom you may regularly consume water.

During the past several months, the Acton Water District, in cooperation with State and Federal partners, has been proactively investigating the presence of per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, or PFAS, as commonly referred to. You may have heard of these referred to as “forever chemicals” due to the persistent nature of their chemistry. This began with the investigation of the presence of these compounds at the W.R. Grace and Nuclear Metals, Inc. Superfund sites and ultimately included sampling of every operating well and treatment facility in our system.

Although these compounds were identified in our wells and treated water, it is unclear at this time where the source of the PFAS is originating. Due to the broad use of PFAS in multiple consumer and industrial products, it could be challenging to identify a point source as has been the case with other contaminants detected in Acton throughout the past 40 years. The Public Notice that follows will provide additional information on what the chemicals are, what actions customers may want to take, actions we have taken to date, and a roadmap of how we intend to begin addressing the presence of PFAS in our water supply.

Our elected officials, staff, and consultants are working hard to provide the best water we can to our customers. We continue to work towards sustainable solutions and will provide ongoing information and updates to our customers as it becomes available. Please feel free to contact myself or our Environmental Manager with questions and concerns about PFAS or the operation of our water system.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Allen, District Manager

Water Supply District of Acton, Acton, MA

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).

The Acton Water District (District) first sampled for PFAS in 2013 when mandatory assessment monitoring was required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule. Those results did not identify any PFAS concerns in Acton. In 2019, sampling for PFAS by the EPA Superfund program conducted at both the WR Grace and NMI sites during the fall of 2019 which included some of the District's wells showed the presence of PFAS. Between January 13, 2020 and April 28, 2020, the District voluntarily conducted initial and confirmation PFAS sampling of all of its active sources and entry points to the distribution system for the finished blend water (from multiple well sources). PFAS compounds have been detected in the drinking water below the current health guideline established by the EPA but above the recently revised health guideline established by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). This notice provides information about the District's and MassDEP's ongoing efforts to address PFAS in drinking water and provide health-protective guidelines.

In 2016, EPA published a drinking water Health Advisory Level for two of the PFAS compounds (Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, PFOS, and Perfluorooctanoic acid, PFOA) combined at 0.070 micrograms per liter (ug/L) or 70 parts per trillion (ppt). In January 2020, MassDEP issued an Office of Research and Standards guideline (ORSG) for drinking water of 0.020 ug/L or 20 ppt for six PFAS compounds combined. Those compounds are PFOA, PFOS, PFNA (Perfluorononanoic acid), PFHxS (Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid), PFHpA (Perfluoroheptanoic acid) and Perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA). 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 recommends that:

- 1) Consumers in sensitive subgroups (pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants) not consume water when the level of the six PFAS substances, individually or in combination, is above 20 ppt.**
- 2) Public water suppliers take steps expeditiously to lower levels of the six PFAS, individually or in combination, to below 20 ppt for all consumers.**

As part of the agency's efforts to address PFAS compounds, in December 2019 MassDEP proposed a PFAS Drinking Water Regulation with a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 20 ng/L for the same six PFAS compounds in the ORSG. The public comment period for the

proposed MCL closed on February 28, 2020. Information on the PFAS MCL process, can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/lists/development-of-a-pfas-drinking-water-standard-mcl>.

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

Samples collected between January 13, 2020 and April 28, 2020 at the entry points to our distribution system for the finished blend water (from multiple well sources) showed a range of 0.0 to 48.33 ppt of the combined total of the following six PFAS compounds: PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFDA. The individual sample dates and results may be found on our webpage <https://www.actonwater.com/pfas>.

You should consider taking the following steps while actions are being implemented to address this issue:

- Sensitive subgroups, including pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants, use bottled water¹ for drinking and cooking of foods that absorb water (like pasta).
- Use bottled water¹ to make infant formula or use formula that does not require adding water.
- For older children and adults, the 20 ppt 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 lower the PFAS concentration in the drinking water, use of bottled water¹ will reduce your exposure.
- Water contaminated with PFAS can be treated by home water treatment systems that are certified to remove PFAS by an independent testing group such as NSF, UL, Water Quality Association, or the CSA Group. These may include point of entry systems, which treat all the water entering a home, or point of use devices, which treat water where it is used, such as at a faucet.
- In most situations the water can be safely used for washing foods, brushing teeth, bathing and showering. If you have cuts or broken skin, you may want to avoid long showers or baths. If you are concerned about your exposure, even though the risk is very low, you may want to use bottled water¹ for brushing your teeth and cleaning items like dentures, pacifiers, and fruits and vegetables.
- Note: boiling the water will not destroy these chemicals and will somewhat increase their levels due to evaporation of some of the water.
- If you have specific health concerns regarding your exposure, you should consult a health professional, such as your doctor.

What is our water system doing?

Our system has taken the following actions:

¹ MassDEP recommends using bottled water that has been tested and found not to contain PFAS. See MassDEP Bottled Water Companies surveyed list at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

- In coordination with MassDEP and with their financial support, conducted sampling of all raw and treated sources of water within our system.
- The treated water at the entrance points to the distribution system will be sampled at least quarterly for those sites above 10 ppt for the 6 PFAS compounds combined. Additional monitoring of sites below 10 ppt and of untreated water will be done on an as needed basis or as directed by MassDEP.
- The water supply well with the highest initial PFAS levels (Assabet 1A Well) was removed from service on March 9th and has been used in a limited capacity. Additional monitoring is required to understand the benefits of changing the operation of this source.
- The North Acton Treatment Plant, which has the highest treated water concentrations of PFAS, was removed from service on April 30th to conduct major maintenance activities. Additional sampling needs to be conducted when the work is completed to determine if this source will remain offline in the short term while a permanent solution can be developed.
- Working to retain a consulting engineer to assist in developing a permanent solution for the North Acton Water Treatment Plant.
- Evaluated and eliminated potentially PFAS containing plumbing materials at our sample locations.
- Initiated investigations into activating alternative water supply wells within Acton that are not currently connected to our system. This includes pursuing new source approval, reactivation of existing wells, and exploring the feasibility of connecting infrastructure to existing treatment facilities.
- Providing broad public notice to all Postal Patrons of the presence of PFAS in Acton. Ongoing notices will be provided to billed customers, made available on our web page, and emailed to interested parties. You may sign up for PFAS email updates by sending your name, address, and email to wq@actonwater.com with “Updates” in the subject line.
- We will post relevant updates on the PFAS water quality results, actions we are taking, and other PFAS contamination related issues on the District web page at <https://www.actonwater.com/pfas>.

What are PFAS and how are people exposed to them?

PFAS are fluorinated organic chemicals. PFOA and 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 visit our website <https://www.actonwater.com/pfas> or contact Chris Allen, District Manager or Matthew Mostoller, Environmental Manager by phone at 978-263-9107, email address: wq@actonwater.com, or in writing to Acton Water District, P.O. Box 953, Acton, MA 01720.

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

- MassDEP Fact Sheet – PFAS in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers for Consumers <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-4>
- USEPA’s Drinking Water Health Advisories can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-waterand-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>
- The Acton Water will post regular updates at <https://www.actonwater.com/pfas>
- 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:

PWS Name: Water Supply District of Acton

PWS ID#: 2002000

Date distributed: June 26, 2020

Acton Water District

PWS 20020000

Report on Water Quality, Summer 2020

2019 Water Report Online at www.actonwater.com/ccr

Important Water Quality Information

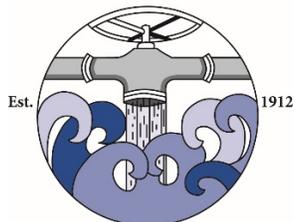
Please visit our website, www.actonwater.com/ccr, for important information regarding your drinking water. If needed, have someone translate it for you or speak with someone who understands it. This link will take you to our Summer edition of *WaterWords*, including our regulatory required *Consumer Confidence Report*.

If you would like a hard copy of this document, please contact Matthew Mostoller at 978-263-9107 or matt@actonwater.com.

Water Words Notice is published twice a year for all customers of the Acton Water District.

District Manager - Chris Allen, Editor - Matthew Mostoller, Commissioners – Erika Amir-Lin, Barry Rosen, Stephen Stuntz

Acton Water



District

Acton Water District

P.O. Box 953

Acton, MA 01720

POSTAL PATRON

ACTON, MA 01720