

PFAS Summary for Town of Medfield Drinking Water System

21 May 2025

Summary:

The Town of Medfield is in compliance with the current Mass DEP regulations regarding maximum contaminant levels for PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in its drinking water supply.

On 10 April 2024, the US EPA promulgated its own allowable maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for PFAS compounds. In general, the limits established by the US EPA are much more stringent and even more specific than the current Mass DEP regulations.

On 14 May 2025, the US EPA announced¹ the following changes to the current National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR):

1. To continue to enforce existing regulations of 5 parts per trillion for each compound
 - a. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), and
 - b. Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS)
2. Its intention to rescind four of the six measures from the 2024 PFAS MCLs (PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX), and the Hazard Index mixture of these three plus PFBS).
3. Proposed an extension of compliance from 2029 to 2031

States are required to establish regulations that are no less stringent than the federal standards within two years of the promulgation of the federal MCL, with the possibility of an extension of up to two years.

The Town has been advised that new, more stringent regulations are forthcoming from the Mass DEP. Therefore, the Medfield Board of Water and Sewerage thinks it is prudent for the Town to await regulatory clarity from the DEP prior to initiating actions for additional treatment or handling methods to any of its well sources.

Background:

In 2020 the State of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), put in force a regulation for the maximum level of six chemical compounds, commonly referred to the “PFAS” family which are allowable in drinking water systems in Massachusetts. This regulation was installed absent a regulation by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for these compounds at that time.

The Town of Medfield, as per DEP monitoring regulations, has been sampling Town well waters for these compounds, and all the Town’s wells have been compliant with the current DEP quality regulations.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-it-will-keep-maximum-contaminant-levels-pfoa-pfoss>

On 10 April 2024, the EPA promulgated its own limits for this PFAS family of compounds in drinking water. The EPA established limits for some of the same PFAS compounds as the DEP, it did not include some others, and it has listed additional compounds not considered previously in the DEP regulations. Furthermore, the method of calculating to the compliance of the compounds with the EPA regulations differs with the method used by the DEP in its regulations. In general, the new limits established by the EPA are much more stringent and even more specific than the current DEP regulations. The DEP estimates that 30% of MA water systems will need to treat or abandon water sources if the EPA regulations are adopted by the DEP.

On 14 May 2025, the US EPA supported the limits of PFOA and PFOS as promulgated in 2024, except that it intends to rescind four other measures: PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA (commonly known as GenX), and the Hazard Index mixture of these three plus PFBS.

With the 14 May 2025 announcement by the US EPA, it is unclear the number of Massachusetts communities that will need to address PFAS to meet the PFOA and PFOS limits. Based on the PFOA and PFOS limits of 4 parts per trillion for each compound, it is anticipated that Medfield will need to address PFAS in at least two wells (Well 1 and Well 2).

Furthermore, the DEP may promulgate more stringent regulations, as per the DEP PFAS website:²

“States are required to establish regulations that are no less stringent than the federal standards within two years of the promulgation of the federal MCL, with the possibility of an extension of up to two years.... MassDEP will be proposing amendments to its PFAS regulations to be at least as stringent as the EPA MCLs and will be holding public hearings to receive public input on this proposal.”

A feasibility study was proactively prepared in 2022 for treatment strategies and costs for the Town’s drinking water sources in case action is required by the Town.

The Town of Medfield is in compliance with the current DEP regulations but the Town has been advised that new, more stringent regulations are forthcoming from the DEP. Therefore, it is prudent for the Town to await regulatory clarity from the DEP prior to initiating actions for additional treatment or handling methods to any of its well sources.

² <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/epa-maximum-contaminant-levels-mcls-for-pfas>