



# PFAS and State Action Levels

## Monitoring, Follow-up Actions, and Public Notice

Updated November 1, 2021

Starting in 2002, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been detected in U.S. drinking water, primarily near manufacturing facilities, local fire departments, military bases, and airports. Between 2013 and 2015, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) required a representative number of Group A water systems to measure for six PFAS as part of the third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 3). Results from UCMR 3 and additional testing at military bases identified several areas in Washington with PFAS in groundwater.

The State Board of Health (board) is revising the Group A rule (chapter 246-290 WAC) to address concerns about PFAS, contaminants that do not have a maximum contaminant level (MCL). The board and the department are concerned because almost a dozen Group A public water systems and over 200 private wells in five areas of the state are known to have PFAS contamination in their groundwater supplies above EPA and other state's health advisory levels. The newly adopted changes set requirements for monitoring and reporting, follow-up actions, and public notice for contaminants without an MCL. The newly adopted changes include state action levels (SALs) for five PFAS compounds.

### Monitoring

For community and nontransient noncommunity Group A water systems, the adopted rule:

- Outlines the criteria for determining initial monitoring schedules—based upon source susceptibility, vulnerability to PFAS contamination, and populations served.
- Adds a requirement for water systems to sample new sources for PFAS as part of approval of new sources.
- Establishes an initial PFAS sample requirement for every active, permanent, or seasonal source to be collected from the entry point to distribution—no later than December 31, 2025,—and then once every three years thereafter.
- Adds increased monitoring in the case of detections (see tables below for specifics).
- Includes minimum requirements for samples collected prior to January 1, 2023, to be accepted to meet initial monitoring requirements.
- Clarifies sample analysis is performed using EPA-approved methods or other department-approved methods.
- Removes several outdated monitoring requirements to align with federal regulations.
- Clarifies averaging of disinfection byproducts sample results is based on either a running annual average (RAA) or a locational RAA.
- Allows the department to require confirmation samples for results with detections and explains how the confirmation samples will be used.
- Allows the department to develop a waiver model for PFAS. PFAS data from Washington will be used to decide if and where waivers may be appropriate.
- Allows public water systems that are required to participate in UCMR 5 to submit complete UCMR 5 PFAS data sets to meet the initial state monitoring requirements.

The rule requires [transient noncommunity \(TNC\) systems](#) that are near known or suspected PFAS contamination to collect PFAS samples for analysis as well. If PFAS is detected in the sample, TNC systems must comply with the follow-up requirements in WAC 246-290-320(8).

## Follow-up Actions

**Monitoring after detections:** The rule includes a requirement for water systems with detections of unregulated contaminants, including PFAS, to conduct increased quarterly monitoring in the first year. (See Table 10, in section 315(8) of the rule language for details.)

**Increased monitoring** (for systems following the first detection).

First Year Highest Results	Total Number of Quarters Required (Including Initial Detection)
<b>Low</b> —Less than or equal to 20% of SAL	<b>2 quarters</b>
<b>Moderate</b> —Between 20% and 80% of SAL	<b>3 quarters</b>
<b>High</b> —Greater than or equal to 80% of SAL	<b>4 quarters</b>

The frequency of ongoing monitoring (see Table 11, section 315(8) of the rule language for details) after a detection will depend on the level of the contaminant detected in the impacted source.

**Ongoing monitoring** (Following increased monitoring per the above table).

Last Year of Results	Frequency
<b>Low</b> —Less than or equal to 20% of SAL	<b>Every 3 years</b>
<b>Moderate</b> —Between 20% and 80% of SAL	<b>Annually</b>
<b>High</b> —Greater than or equal to 80% of SAL	<b>Quarterly</b>

If a water system installs treatment to remove a contaminant with a SAL, the rule will require quarterly monitoring to ensure the treatment is effective. See the [PFAS Process Flowchart \(publication #331-668\)](#) for more about monitoring.

## Public Notice

The rule includes a requirement that all water systems that exceed a SAL must inform customers about the health effects of the contaminant, what they are doing to address the issue, and what consumers can do to reduce their exposure. Timing and content of the public notice would depend on the health risks of the contaminant.

Because PFAS are bioaccumulative, the rule requires all water systems with confirmed detections of PFAS above a SAL to provide public notice to their customers as soon as possible but no later than thirty days. Public notice would be required quarterly if PFAS levels continue to exceed a SAL. The rule includes a requirement for community water systems to provide information on detected PFAS in their annual consumer confidence report.

The rule makes several minor technical and editorial changes to improve clarity, including changing the term “analytes” to “contaminants” for consistency with federal regulations.

### For more information

Visit our [PFAS Webpage](#) or the Office of Drinking Water’s [Rulemaking webpage](#).

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