Understanding PFAS: What You Need to Know

What Are PFAS?

PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) are a group of man-made chemicals used in many everyday products—think nonstick cookware, water-resistant clothing, food packaging, and firefighting foams. They're also found in some industrial processes.

Because of their durability, PFAS are often called “forever chemicals.” They don’t break down easily in the environment and can build up in people and animals over time.

Why Should We Care?

Most Americans have been exposed to PFAS, often without knowing it. The primary pathway for exposure is through drinking water.

Scientific research has linked exposure to certain levels of PFAS with:

- Increased risk of some cancers

- Hormonal disruption

- Reproductive effects (e.g., decreased fertility, high blood pressure during pregnancy)

- Developmental issues in children

- Immune system suppression (including reduced vaccine effectiveness)

- Increased cholesterol levels

Unfortunately, most traditional drinking water systems weren't built to detect or remove PFAS, and it’s only in recent years that technology has made accurate testing possible.

EPA Sets New PFAS Standards

On April 10, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized new Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for six PFAS compounds in drinking water:

Compound	MCL (parts per trillion – ppt)
PFOA	4.0 ppt
PFOS	4.0 ppt
GenX Chemicals	10 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt

Additionally, mixtures of PFNA, PFHxS, GenX chemicals, and PFBS will be evaluated using a Hazard Index to determine combined health risks.

Public water systems must meet these new standards by April 26, 2029.

What's Required of Water Systems Like Ours?

Initial Monitoring

- Must be completed by April 26, 2027

- Requires four quarterly samples over 12 months

- Monitoring results must be included in Davidson Water's Annual Water Quality Report

Compliance Monitoring

- Begins April 26, 2027

- Quarterly testing continues at sites determined by NCDEQ

- Systems must test during normal operations and report results fully to the state

Reporting Requirements

For each sample, Davidson Water must report:

- The Running Annual Average (RAA)

- If results meet or exceed a trigger or MCL

- Whether an MCL has been violated

Davidson Water's PFAS Status

We're committed to staying ahead of requirements and ensuring safe drinking water for our members.

Here's where we stand:

- Two rounds of PFAS testing are complete

- First round (UCMR 5): All sample results were non-detect

- Second round (March 2025): All were non-detect except one:

  - PFOS: 2.2 ppt – Well below the EPA limit of 4.0 ppt

  - This result means we'll begin quarterly monitoring

Next round of testing is scheduled for September 2025

Note: Only the EP1 sample from UCMR 5 is usable for initial monitoring under the new rule. Some UCMR locations aren't applicable to the updated PFAS regulations.

Resources for Members

We understand that PFAS can be confusing and even concerning.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has compiled a document at the link below that contains information about PFAS Water Testing and Filtration Resources

NCDHHS PFAS Water Testing and Filtration Resources

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact:

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