

NO PFAS DETECTED IN THE WAUNAKEE WATER SYSTEM

New PFAS Drinking Water Regulations are Now Effective for Wisconsin Municipal Water Utilities

Wisconsin has now adopted new drinking water standards for two chemicals that are part of a group of thousands of synthetic chemicals referred to as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) which have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940's. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) are two of the most widely used and studied chemicals in the PFAS group.

A major concern with PFAS chemicals is that they break down very slowly and as a result can build up in people, animals, and the environment over time. Because of their widespread use and their persistence in the environment, many PFAS are found in the blood of people and animals all over the world and are present at low levels in a variety of food products and in the environment.

Effective August 1, Wisconsin has begun regulating PFOA and PFOS in drinking water. Wisconsin's new drinking water standard for PFOA and PFOS are 70 parts per trillion.

Over the next year, all Wisconsin municipal water utilities will be required to test their drinking water for PFOA and PFOS based on the testing schedule established by the DNR. If a water sample exceeds 70 parts per trillion, the utility will be required to take the steps needed to meet the new state standard. That may mean abandoning or not using a well or constructing a system to treat the drinking water.

The DNR encouraged municipal utilities to participate in a voluntary sampling program prior to the new regulations on PFAS levels going into effect. Waunakee Utilities opted into this voluntary program in order to determine PFAS levels within the drinking water supply.

The utility recently performed sampling on all five of the water sources to test for the presence of various PFAS. The testing was done by the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. The testing results indicated that, in all samples, no PFAS levels were detected.

"Protecting the public's health through clean, safe drinking water is our number one priority at Waunakee Utilities," said Waunakee Utilities General Manager Tim Herlitzka. "We were excited to participate in the sampling program offered by the DNR so we could provide customers with clear information about the presence of PFAS in the drinking water. We are pleased with the testing results which indicated that no PFAS were detected. This further demonstrates that the water we provide customers is of the highest quality."

The EPA has not yet adopted federal drinking water standards for PFOA or PFOS but has stated that it intends to propose a federal standard for them this fall.

More information on PFAS can be found on the websites of the EPA, the DNR, or the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Contact Tim Herlitzka, Waunakee Utilities General Manager at therlitzka@waunakeeutilities.com or (608) 849-2899 with questions about this matter.



At Waunakee Utilities, we join forces with other local not-for-profit utilities through WPPI Energy to share resources and lower costs.

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