

PFAS – Testing Private Drinking Water

How do I know if my private water system has PFAS?

Laboratory testing is the only way to determine if a private water system is impacted by per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are in many items most people use on a daily basis, including water- or stain-resistant fabrics in your home and clothing, personal hygiene products, and food and beverage packaging. Because of that, it is difficult to collect a water sample without contaminating it. It is recommended that water samples be collected by someone specifically trained to sample drinking water for PFAS analysis.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) have identified a list of companies that provide the service of collecting water samples for PFAS. Neither ODH nor OEPA endorse any of the vendors on the list and consumers are advised to research any services they may obtain from these companies and the full cost of sample collection and analysis. The list can be found [here](#).

Companies that provide for collection of water samples for PFAS have a relationship with a laboratory certified to perform the U.S. EPA Method 537.1 or U.S. EPA Method 533 testing. These companies will follow a certified laboratory's paperwork and shipping requirements and provide sample results.

What labs can test for PFAS?

The analysis of PFAS in drinking water requires special analytical techniques that most local laboratories are unable to perform. It is important to use a laboratory that is certified by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC), United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), or accepted by OEPA to test for PFAS to ensure that sample results are accurate.

U.S. EPA currently has three published laboratory methods available to test drinking water for PFAS:

- U.S. EPA Method 537 version 1.1.
 - Published September 2009.
 - 14 individual PFAS.
- U.S. EPA Method 537.1.
 - Published November 2018.
 - 18 individual PFAS.
- U.S. EPA Method 533.
 - Published December 2019.
 - 25 individual PFAS.

A list of accepted labs that will work directly with an individual resident to complete drinking water testing for PFAS using U.S. EPA Method 537.1 or U.S. EPA Method 533 can be found [here](#).

Water sample results will be provided in a report several weeks after the sample was collected. For additional information see the factsheet PFAS – How to Read a PFAS Lab Report.

What are Ohio's PFAS action levels?

Ohio EPA and ODH have established PFAS Action Levels for the six PFAS chemicals listed in the table below. Ohio EPA and ODH use these action levels as thresholds in providing guidance to residents, drinking water system owners and operators on health effects, ways to reduce exposures, and options for treating drinking water.

PFAS ¹						
	PFOA	PFOS	GenX	PFBS	PFHxS	PFNA
Action Level (ppt) ²	>70 single or combined with PFOS	>70 single or combined with PFOA	>21	>2,100	>140	>21

¹ PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic acid); PFOS (Perfluorooctane sulfonate); GenX (HFPO dimer acid); PFBS (Perfluorobutanesulfonic acid); PFHxS (Perfluorohexane sulfonic acid); and PFNA (Perfluorononanoic acid).

² PPT (Parts per trillion) which is the same as ng/L or nanograms per liter

For More Information

For more information on PFAS, including the health effects of PFAS, PFAS in drinking water, water testing and treatment, and other PFAS activities in Ohio, visit the [Ohio PFAS webpage](#).

For more information on PFAS and your health, contact the ODH Health Assessment Section at BEH@odh.ohio.gov or at (614) 728-9452.