

PFAS CHEMICALS FACT SHEET

Created by Progressive Companies / Water Resources Group

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, also known as PFAS, are commonly used, human-made chemicals that persist in the environment for long periods of time. PFAS are present in air, water, sediment, and biological communities within contaminated areas. PFAS are commonly used in the electronics, furniture, aerospace, automotive, packaging, waterproofing, and construction industries, among others. Due to their widespread presence and slow degradation, PFAS have been detected in the blood of humans and animals worldwide. While they have the potential to cause adverse health effects primarily through ingestion, the risks associated with dermal contact and breathing contaminated air are generally considered to be minimal.

Of particular concern in the Great Lakes region, namely near Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, are contaminated fish containing some of the highest PFAS concentrations in the US due to the region's industrial history. There are ongoing scientific studies aimed at quantifying the health impacts caused by PFAS exposure to better understand their associated risks and to outline the actions that need to be taken.

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Water Resources Division (WRD) works to identify sources of PFAS by conducting water sampling on lakes and streams across the state, while also working with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to collect and analyze fish for contamination. These analyses inform the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)'s decisions on fish consumption advisories, which have been issued on water bodies throughout the state where PFAS contamination is high.

Under Executive Order 2019-03, Governor Whitmer permanently established the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) to address the developing threat of PFAS in Michigan. MPART operates within EGLE and advises seven state agencies on PFAS action.

Both federal and state agencies work to set maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for PFAS in drinking water and surface water that help to regulate drinking water utilities and inform consumption advisories. These standards are regularly updated at both the state and federal levels as new scientific data emerges and understanding of the health risks associated with these chemicals evolves. These updates aim to provide stronger protections for public health and the environment.



DO NOT EAT THE FISH

This area is part of the Do Not Eat Fish Advisory issued by the State of Michigan due to high amounts of PFAS found in fish.

Enjoy swimming, boating, and catch and release fishing. Touching the water is not a health concern.

For more information, call MDHHS at 1-800-648-6942 or visit www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse

Logos for MDHHS, EGLE, and DEQ are also present.

The MDHHS issues fish consumption advisories for certain areas where elevated levels of PFAS are detected in waterways.



Michigan PFAS Action Response Team
michigan.gov/pfasresponse

Identifying PFAS in a lake or stream via sampling is best left to professionals. PFAS can sometimes be visually identified as it can appear as a foam along shorelines, but this is not always the case. Additionally, there are also naturally occurring types of organic foam that have a similar appearance to foam caused by PFAS chemicals. PFAS foam is often a bright white color that can be sticky and behave similar to shaving cream. Naturally occurring foam tends to be more of an off-white color and has earthier characteristics. The MDHHS recommends that everyone avoid foam on lakes and streams known to be contaminated with PFAS. If the presence of PFAS is suspected in your lake, contact the State of Michigan Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278 or by email at Assist@Michigan.gov to discuss options for sampling, reporting, and remediating.

For more information about PFAS in Michigan, visit michigan.gov/pfasresponse.

References:

Brown, D. (2020, April 27). What to do if you find suspicious foam. Huron River Watershed Council. Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.hrwc.org/what-to-do-if-you-find-suspicious-foam>

Brown, S. (2023, January 31). Great Lakes Region State Governments Confronted with a Significant Challenge in Working to Mitigate an Increasingly Widespread PFAS Contamination Problem. MWA. Retrieved February 2, 2023, from <https://michiganwaterfrontalliance.com/2023/01/31/great-lakes-region-state-governments-confronted-with-a-significant-challenge-in-working-to-mitigate-an-increasingly-widespread-pfas-contamination-problem/>

PFAS explained. United States Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.) Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>

PFAS sampling in lakes and streams. SOM - State of Michigan - Michigan PFAS Action Response Team. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/investigations/lakes-and-streams>



PFAS can appear as foam on shorelines and are often a bright white color and look similar to shaving cream.

- Huron River Watershed Council

A reliable resource for information on Michigan's inland lakes.



michiganlakeinfo
www.michiganlakeinfo.com

