



## FIRE TRAINING FACILITIES ASSESSMENT FOR PFOA AND PFOS

### PERFLUOROCTANOIC ACID AND PERFLUOROCTANE SULFONATE

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why is DEP performing these groundwater assessments at the state's fire training facilities?**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is taking steps to safeguard Florida communities by conducting statewide assessments to evaluate the potential presence of Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in groundwater at or around fire training facilities across the state. Historically, these chemicals have been a prevalent component of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) used by firefighting professionals in communities, refineries, military installations, airports and chemical plants.

Within the past two years, DEP's Site Investigation Section (SIS) has become involved in several PFAS studies where AFFF was identified as a source of groundwater contamination. For this reason, it was determined that firefighter training facilities warrant closer observation. These studies are similar to those being conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense around military installations who also used the foam during their routine operations.

### **How did DEP determine which fire training facilities would be tested?**

SIS conducted a statewide survey of 45 fire training facilities in 2018. This survey gathered information with regard to historic use of AFFF and whether the facility has on-site potable wells or there are nearby privately-owned potable supply wells in order to rank these sites for assessment. In 2019 and early 2020, SIS conducted assessment at 25 of the fire training facilities where usage of AFFF was confirmed or suspected. Where contamination was identified, DEP is working with the facility owners to develop and complete assessment work, and cleanup plans if necessary. DEP is undertaking these same obligations where contamination was identified on properties owned by the State.

### **What are Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS)?**

PFOA and PFOS synthetic industrial chemicals have been used in a variety of commercial products since the 1950s, including stain and water repellents used in textile manufacturing and fire suppression foams. Producers of PFOA and PFOS in the United States started phasing out production of these compounds in the early 2000s.

### **What is a Health Advisory Level (HAL)?**

Health Advisory Levels (HALs) are based on the best available peer-reviewed science, including lab and epidemiological studies regarding exposure to certain chemicals and compounds.

While HALs do not establish a regulatory limit or "maximum contaminant level" for drinking water, they do provide guidance to state and local officials in evaluating drinking water quality based on levels below which adverse health effects are not anticipated to occur over a lifetime of exposure.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) have established a Health Advisory Level of 70 ng/L (parts per trillion) for drinking water.

### **Are private wells also being tested?**

In instances where elevated levels of PFOA and PFOS are detected in monitor wells or an existing potable well at the fire training facilities, DEP works with DOH to identify and sample private wells in a 1-mile radius in order to determine if there are any offsite groundwater impacts. Analytical results of this sampling will determine the most appropriate course of action regarding possible future assessment and outreach.

## **How did these chemicals get in the water?**

While no longer produced in the United States, these chemicals can be persistent in the environment. That is why DEP has been actively engaged in studies to determine if the chemicals are being detected in soils, groundwater and drinking water.

## **What were the results of testing performed by DEP so far?**

A The testing results and general assessment information can be found on the DEP Fire Training Facility Site Assessments web page: <https://floridadep.gov/waste/waste-cleanup/content/fire-training-facility-site-assessments>.

## **If my well is tested by DOH, how long will it take to get my results and how will I get them?**

If DOH collects a private well sample, it will notify the owner of the lab results. Typically, lab results are expected in 2-3 weeks.

## **Do I need to use an alternative water supply until my results are received?**

Your health and safety is our top priority. We want to assure you that there is no need for immediate concern. There is a very low risk of any effects from short-term exposure to PFOS and PFOA.

There is no reason you need to change your daily routine, and an alternative water supply is not necessary. If it is your personal preference, you may choose to utilize an alternative water for drinking, cooking or brushing teeth until your results are received.

## **What do I do if my well is affected?**

The most common solution is a simple filtration system.

DEP's Water Supply Restoration Program provides access to bottled water or other alternative water supply to any affected well owner whose test results exceed the established EPA Health Advisory Level. This voluntary program also provides funding for a filter, well restoration or connection to public water system as necessary to ensure a safe drinking water supply. An alternative water supply remains in place until a long-term solution is established.

Water Supply Restoration Program information can be found here: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/water-supply-restoration>. Program staff can be reached at 850-245-2961.

The form to request assistance through this program can be found at: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/water-supply-restoration/documents/request-water-supply-restoration-or-replacement>.

## **Will additional testing be performed?**

Analytical results of ongoing sampling will determine the most appropriate course of action regarding possible future assessment and outreach.