

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

*This report contains important information about your drinking water. Please translate it or speak with someone who understands it or ask the contact listed below for a translation.*

### Webster Water Department located in Webster, Massachusetts has levels of PFAS6 above the Drinking Water Standard

#### **What happened?**

Our water system received notification of PFAS6 results showing that **our system violated the 20 ng/L PFAS6 Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) drinking water standard during the July – September 2021 compliance period with a quarterly average of 22 ng/L at the Bigelow Road Well.** This well was removed from service on September 15, 2021.

Samples collected on July 30, 2021, and August 25, 2021, reported PFAS6 levels of 20.4 ng/L and 24.2 ng/L, respectively. Exceedance of the MCL has been determined from the July and August 2021 results.

Compliance with the PFAS6 MCL is calculated as a quarterly average based upon the total number of samples collected during the compliance period. The location where elevated levels of PFAS6 were reported is from one of two treatment plants that supplies drinking water to our system. PFAS6 levels were reported below the MCL at our other location (Memorial Beach Water Treatment Plant).

#### **What does this mean?**

**This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified immediately.** Although this is not an emergency, as a consumer of the water, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did and are doing to correct this situation.

On October 2, 2020, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) issued a new drinking water regulation setting a maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) for the sum of six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (called PFAS6). PFAS6 includes perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA) and perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA).

PFAS are man-made chemicals that have been used in the manufacturing of certain fire-fighting foams, moisture and stain resistant products, and other industrial processes. An MCL is the maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water which is delivered to any user of a public water system. **Some people who drink water containing PFAS6 in excess of the MCL may experience certain adverse effects. These could include effects on the liver, blood, immune system, thyroid, and fetal development. These PFAS6 may also elevate the risk of certain cancers.** For more information on PFAS, see the links below.

#### **What should I do?**

**For consumers in a sensitive subgroup** (pregnant or nursing women, infants, and people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system)

- **Consumers in a sensitive subgroup are advised not to consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ng/L.**
- **Consumers in a sensitive subgroup** are advised to use bottled water for drinking and cooking of foods that absorb water (like pasta).
- **For infant formula**, use bottled water or use formula that does not require adding water.
- **Bottled water should only be used if it has been tested.** The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires companies licensed to sell or distribute bottled water or carbonated non-alcoholic beverages to test for PFAS. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/water-quality-standards-for-bottled-water-in-massachusetts#list-of-bottlers->

## For all other consumers not in a sensitive subgroup

- **If you are not in a sensitive subgroup**, you may continue to consume the water because 20 ng/L value is applicable to a lifetime consuming the water and shorter duration exposures present less risk.
- **If you have specific health concerns regarding your past exposure**, you should see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) link below and consult a health professional, such as your doctor.

**Steps you can take to reduce your intake** - Consider taking the following steps while actions are being implemented to address this issue:

- **For older children and adults (not in a sensitive subgroup)**, the 20 ng/L value is applicable to a lifetime of consuming the water. For these groups, shorter duration exposures present less risk. However, if you are concerned about your exposure while steps are being taken to assess and lower the PFAS6 concentration in the drinking water, use of bottled water<sup>1</sup> will reduce your exposure.
- **In most situations, the water can be safely used for washing foods, brushing teeth, bathing, and showering.**

**Please note: Boiling the water will not destroy PFAS6** and will somewhat increase its level due to evaporation of some of the water.

## What is being done?

Our water system has taken the following pro-active measures:

- Bigelow Road Well has been removed from service.
- Our other sources were sampled, and those sources did not contain PFAS6 above the MCL.
- We will continue to sample our water sources for PFAS.
- We are investigating short and long-term treatment options.
- Prior to Bigelow Road Well being returned to use, public notice will be provided, which will include additional sample results for PFAS6, and an explanation of treatment or other actions taken to support the return of Bigelow Rd Well to service.
- When additional information becomes available, this public notice will be updated.

## Where can I get more information?

For more information, please contact Webster Water Department at 508-949-3861, or visit

<https://www.webster-ma.gov/Water-Department>

Additional information can be found in the **attached factsheet** and weblinks listed below.

- **MassDEP Fact Sheet – Questions and Answers for Consumers**  
<https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351>
- **CDC ATSDR Information on PFAS for consumers and health professionals**  
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>
- **Massachusetts Department of Public Health information about PFAS in Drinking Water -**  
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-drinking-water>
- **Town of Webster**  
<https://www.webster-ma.gov/Water-Department>

This notice is being sent to you by:

Town of Webster

System ID#: 2316000

Date distributed: 10/05/2021 mailed to customers;  
posted in the Webster Times on 10/08/2021

**Please share this information with other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses).**