



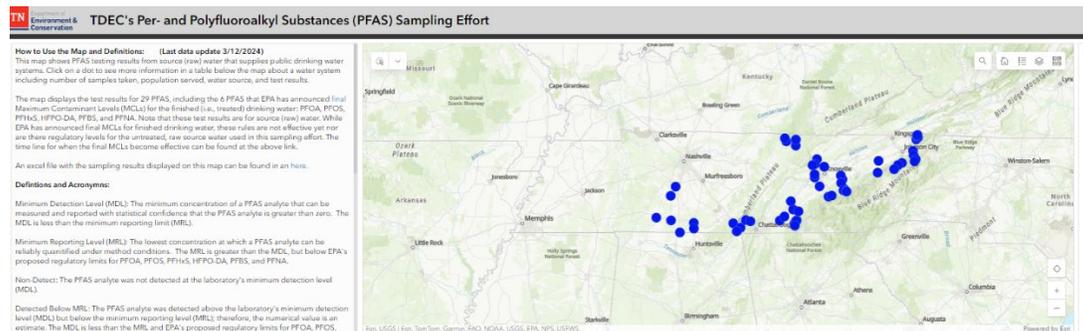
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) PFAS Statewide Sampling Strategy Brief

What are PFAS?

Also known as “forever chemicals”, [per- and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals \(PFAS\)](#) are a large, diverse group of thousands of manmade chemicals that have been manufactured for a variety of consumer and industrial uses in the United States since the 1940s. PFAS have historically been used in consumer products such as water-resistant clothing, cookware, carpets, and food packaging. PFAS have also been widely used in firefighting foams at military installations and fire training facilities. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) are the most studied PFAS chemicals and have been partially, voluntarily phased out by industry¹, though PFOA and PFOS are persistent in the environment. While PFAS do not occur naturally, PFAS may be found throughout the environment due to their long history of use. There are many other PFAS, including GenX chemicals and perfluorobutane sulfonate (PFBS), in use throughout the country. PFAS have previously been detected in groundwater, surface water, finished public drinking water, private wells, and in fish tissue samples in Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) is working to protect Tennesseans from potential risks posed by PFAS. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry \(ATSDR\)](#), there is some evidence that prolonged exposure to certain PFAS can cause pregnancy complications, liver damage, high cholesterol, cancer (PFOA), immune system effects, and thyroid hormone disruption (PFOS).

TDEC PFAS Statewide Sampling Effort

TDEC works alongside local, state, and federal partners to monitor PFAS. TDEC has implemented a statewide testing strategy to monitor for PFAS in source (raw/unfinished) water for public drinking water systems². As part of this effort, TDEC has contracted with a private, EPA-certified laboratory to test for 29 PFAS compounds³. TDEC will suggest that water systems investigate PFAS detections in raw water by sampling finished drinking water as necessary. TDEC will test water intakes which provide the source water for Public Water Systems (PWSs). TDEC anticipates full results by summer 2025. To view TDEC PFAS sampling results, please visit [TDEC’s interactive dashboard](#).



¹ In 2002, industry began reducing the production of PFOS. Subsequently, in 2015, industry phased out the production of PFOA. According to the [National Toxicology Program](#), PFOA and PFOS emissions have reduced drastically in the U.S. and Western Europe since phase downs, but less is known about the global emissions impact.

² TDEC is not testing private drinking water wells.

³ Tests will be conducted utilizing [EPA methods 533 and 537.1](#).