

Frequently Asked Questions

What Are PFAS?

According to California State Water Resources Control Board, per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of artificial substances commonly found in consumer and industrial products. PFAS are used for a variety of applications by both industry and residential households. These chemicals are widely used because they are resistant to heat, water and oil. PFAS are a group of human-made chemicals that do not break down easily in the environment — even over a long period of time. The PFAS family of chemicals includes Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (“PFOS”) and Perfluorooctane Acid (“PFOA”). The State of California regulates PFOS and PFOA. PFAS are found in people, wildlife, and fish all over the world.

Who Created PFAS?

Chemists at 3M and Dupont developed the initial PFAS chemicals in the 1930s. The companies found that the material had the incredible ability to repel oil and water. After World War II, Dupont commercialized PFOA into the revolutionary product that the company branded “Teflon.”

Only a short time later, 3M invented its own PFAS chemical called perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), which they sold under the name “Scotchgard.” Within a short period, various PFAS chemicals were used in hundreds of products – today, it numbers in the thousands.

How are people exposed to PFAS?

Most people have been exposed to these chemicals through consumer products, and virtually all Americans have detectable levels of PFAS in their blood. These chemicals have been widely used for decades in industrial applications and consumer products. PFAS may be in drinking water, food, indoor dust, some consumer products and workplaces. Although some types of PFAS are no longer used, some products may still contain PFAS:

- Food packaging materials
- Nonstick cookware
- Stain-resistant carpet treatments
- Water-resistant clothing
- Cleaning products
- Paints, varnishes and sealants
- Firefighting foam
- Some cosmetics

Does Montebello Water Contain PFAS?

Test results show detection of PFAS above the notification level in most of our wells.

Do Other Water Providers Have PFAS?

Yes. PFAS have been found in water sources servicing nearly 8 million people in California. As of January 2021, 2,337 locations in 49 states are known to have PFAS.

What Is Montebello Land & Water Company Doing About PFAS?

MLWC regularly tests the water it serves to ensure it meets or surpasses all state and federal drinking water standards. MLWC is committed to ensuring that the community is knowledgeable and informed regarding the quality of the water MLWC serves. MLWC posts its annual water quality report in English and Spanish on its website (<https://www.mtblw.com/>). MLWC monitors all of its wells and continues to be proactive in protecting public health. In addition, MLWC is doing the following:

- MLWC has hired an engineering company to design a central treatment facility at the MLWC yard where several wells are located and at a separate treatment facility near another well to remove PFAS from groundwater it pumps.
- MLWC continues to stay current with State and Federal regulations to ensure the drinking water it provides continues to stay safe for consumption.
- MLWC will continue to work with the Regional Water Quality Control Board regulators and outside experts to identify potential sources of PFAS.
- MLWC will stay current with changing technology for both detection and treatment.

Who is paying for the water treatment?

We are working with the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) to pay for most if not all the PFAS treatment. MLWC is a not-for-profit mutual water company and is suing several companies, including 3M and Dupont, in South Carolina Federal Court over allegations that the companies knowingly or negligently allowed PFAS to seep into the drinking water in our community. The lawsuit seeks to recoup the costs that the MLWC and WRD are spending to remove PFAS from the groundwater.

PFAS and Health

The industry's understanding and ability to detect PFAS in the environment has evolved and we are now able to measure extremely small amounts (parts per trillion in water) of a number of PFAS and newer studies suggest that long-term exposure to PFAS in this range might affect the most vulnerable members of the population.

Although more research is needed, scientific studies indicate that exposure to PFAS can lead to significant health effects, especially in pregnant women or women likely to become pregnant and in children. Studies also show that PFAS may affect growth, learning and behavior of babies and older children, affect the immune system, increase cholesterol levels and increase cancer risk.

Many agencies are looking at PFAS.

- The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a PFAS Action Plan in February 2019 with a goal to identify EPA-led short-term actions, longer-term research,

and potential regulatory approaches designed to reduce the risks associated with PFAS in the environment.

- The California Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water established Notification and Response Levels for PFAS and PFOS in August of 2019.
- The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment is working on establishing a Public Health Goal (PHG) for both PFOA and PFOS. A PHG is the level of a drinking water contaminant at which adverse health effects are not expected to occur from a lifetime of exposure.

A detailed fact sheet can be found on the [California Water Boards website](#).

PFAS and Home Treatment of Water

We have not evaluated home technologies for PFAS removal. The State of California Water Treatment Device Registration Program has a list of devices for sale in California. The list can be found here: [Registered Water Treatment Devices](#). For additional information and to view a device's Performance Data Sheets for Registered Devices (PDS), follow [this link](#) to PDS for registered devices issued by the State of California Water Treatment Device Registration Program.

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