

Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works

DRINKING WATER PFAS6 PUBLIC EDUCATION

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

Currently, Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works (ARJWW) has not violated the drinking water regulations. This is education material that our Department is required to distribute to our customers about PFAS6.

What is 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. Their manufacturing was discontinued in the U.S. about 30 years ago, but still may be used in imported products. PFAS are resilient and do not degrade easily in soil and water. As a result, they are widely found in the environment where they migrate to the food supply and drinking water. For more information on PFAS, see the links below.

What is an MCL? 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. A PFAS6 MCL violation occurs when the average of all monthly samples collected over a quarter exceeds the MCL. If our system had violated the PFAS6 Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) our system would have issued a PUBLIC NOTICE.

On October 2, 2020, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) promulgated a new drinking water regulation and maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L) for the sum of six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (called PFAS6). Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works confirmed elevated levels of PFAS6 in the drinking water during routine monitoring. Even though the level is above the MCL, a PFAS6 MCL violation has not occurred as violations are based on 3 months of testing. Instead, we are required to provide you with this information to make you aware of the elevated levels so you can make informed decisions about your drinking water while we continue to monitor the water supply.

PFAS6 Results

Location of sample	Date of sample		Result (ng/L)	Average (ng/L)*	MCL (ng/L)
Hingham Street Finish	Initial	1/26/2021	20.95	23.4	20
Hingham Street Finish	Confirmation	2/17/2021	25.87		

*Average = (Initial Result + Confirmation Result) divided by 2.

Hingham Street WTP Finish, Rockland, was one of 3 entrance points (or sources) that supplies drinking water to our system where elevated levels of PFAS6 were reported. PFAS6 levels were reported below the 20 ng/L MCL at our other locations, Great Sandy Bottom WTP, Pembroke and Myers Ave WTP, Abington.

ARJWW is collecting a 3rd PFAS sample in March at the Hingham Street WTP, Rockland. This will complete our quarterly sampling and will allow ARJWW to arrive at a quarterly average (average of 3 monthly samples). Please be aware that currently we are not in violation of the PFAS6 Drinking Water Regulation, however, you MAY receive a Public Notice if the 3rd sample results drives our average above the MCL of 20 ng/L.

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 (pregnant or nursing women, infants and people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system) are advised not to consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ng/L.

- **Sensitive subgroups** 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.** A list of companies that voluntarily tested their water for PFAS and shared the results can be found on MassDEP's website at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/bottled-water-tested-for-pfas>.

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 the 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 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 will reduce your exposure.
- **Home water treatment systems** Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works cannot promote or provide individual home treatment systems and other point-of-use or point-of-entry treatment methods for MCL compliance without a demonstration of compliance with the Massachusetts drinking water regulations and receipt of MassDEP's approval. Our public water supply system has not provided such a demonstration and does not have MassDEP's approval for such a program to address the current PFAS6 MCL exceedance.
 - However, some home water treatment systems used to treat/filter individual faucets or entire homes can lower the level of PFAS6 in drinking water. Consumers should be aware of the following information regarding home water treatment systems and PFAS6.
 - Our public water system has not evaluated any home treatment systems or devices to determine their efficacy to remove and maintain PFAS6 below 20 ng/L and is not aware of a currently available home treatment system or device shown to meet the Massachusetts drinking water standard for PFAS6 of 20 ng/L.
 - Home treatment systems and devices certified by independent testing groups such as NSF, UL, or the Water Quality Association to meet NSF standard P473 or 53 and 58 are currently designed to meet the USEPA's Health Advisory of 70 ng/L for the sum of PFOS and PFOA and are not specifically designed to meet Massachusetts' drinking water standard for PFAS6.
 - Please be aware that the USEPA Health Advisory of 70 ng/L is significantly higher than MassDEP's drinking water standard of 20 ng/L for the PFAS6 compounds.
 - If you decide to use any treatment device, you should check that it is certified to meet the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) standard P473 to remove PFOS and PFOA compounds so that the sum of their concentrations is below the USEPA Health Advisory of 70 ng/L and that the manufacturer has provided you with independently verifiable PFAS6 monitoring results demonstrating that the device can reduce PFAS6 below the Massachusetts 20 ng/L standard.
 - After you identify a treatment device with the manufacturer's independently verifiable PFAS6 monitoring results demonstrating that the device can reduce PFAS6 below 20 ng/L, it is your responsibility to follow the manufacturer's specification for operations, maintenance, and filter replacement.
 - For more information on home treatment devices, see the MassDEP weblinks below.
- **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?

Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works has taken the following proactive measures:

- ARJWW is committed to delivering safe and reliable drinking water to our consumers. We are acting in the public's best interest and taking all necessary steps to address PFAS6 and to meet the state standards. As an example, ARJWW is proactively testing for PFAS6 in our drinking water sources. In Massachusetts, PFAS6 testing requirements would ordinarily begin in April of 2021 for ARJWW, however, it is our belief that early testing is the responsible action to take. This allows our Department to address any potential PFAS6 existing in our sources and expedite methods of treatment to remove it.
- In a short-term effort to address PFAS6 detected at the Hingham Street WTP, ARJWW immediately involved Engineers and notified MassDEP. Since special methods of water treatment are needed to remove PFAS6, investigation was needed. We quickly developed a potential method of Water Treatment to remove the PFAS6 that is present, permitted it, and are presently implementing this technique, which is the addition of powdered activated carbon. We will continue to monitor and address the PFAS6 detects and will apply the best possible method for long-term corrective action in our treatment plant.
- Relatively recent advances in laboratory testing now enable us to test for PFAS6 compounds at extremely low levels. Water systems that tested negative for PFAS6 at parts per billion may now test positive at parts per trillion. However, these tests do not tell us when the PFAS6 entered the water source or from where. This is a new issue for water regulators and water suppliers. In the meantime, ARJWW will continue to monitor our sources for PFAS6 levels on a monthly or quarterly basis as in accordance with the regulations, and will consult with our Engineers to determine the best means to remove it. As we learn new information, we will share it with you, and will keep you regularly updated until we successfully bring the level of PFAS6 in your drinking water below 20 ng/L.

For more information, please contact:

Assistant Superintendent, Kristel Cameron at 781-878-0901, KCameron@abrockwater.com, 366 Centre Ave, Rockland, MA 02370

or

Primary Operator, Tom Royal at 781-878-0901, TRoyal@abrockwater.com, 366 Centre Ave, Rockland, MA 02370

- [MassDEP Fact Sheet - Questions and Answers for Consumers \(https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351\)](https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351)
- [MassDEP Fact Sheet - Home Water Treatment Devices - Point of Entry and Point of Use Drinking Water Treatment - \(https://www.mass.gov/service-details/home-water-treatment-devices-point-of-entry-and-point-of-use-drinking-water\)](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/home-water-treatment-devices-point-of-entry-and-point-of-use-drinking-water)
- [CDC ATSDR Information on PFAS for consumers and health professionals \(https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html\)](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](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-drinking-water)

This public education material is being sent to you by Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works.

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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).