

PFAS Fact Sheet

What Are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of more than 4500 man-made chemicals that have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries since the 1940s. PFAS are resistant to heat, water, and oil, making them persistent in the environment

Where Can They Be Found?

PFAS can be found in food (fast-food packaging), stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, non-stick cookware, fire-fighting foam, paints, and personal care products. People may be exposed to PFAS when they eat or drink contaminated food or liquid, breathe in contaminated air, or touch products containing PFAS.

What Are the Health Effects of Being Exposed?

Over time, PFAS may accumulate in the human body and are toxic at certain concentrations. Adverse health effects may include developmental effects in fetuses during pregnancy, cancer, liver disease, immune system deficiencies, thyroid hormone disruption, and increased cholesterol levels.

Specific PFAS to Know

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonate acid (PFOS) are two of the most widely studied members of the PFAS group. Other PFAS that are gaining increasing attention include GenX chemicals, perfluorobutane sulfonate (PFBS) and perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS). The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) has identified these contaminants of concern.

Definitions to Know

Health Advisory, Health Advisory Level: The US EPA develops a health advisory level when a chemical is found in drinking water and no other regulatory standard exists for that chemical. This is a level that, based on available data, is virtually certain not to cause adverse human health effects if consumed over a lifetime. Health advisories are non-regulatory and not legally enforceable and may change as new information becomes available.

Notification Level: A notification level is a non-regulatory, health-based advisory level for contaminants. They are established at the state level as precautionary measures.

Response Level: A response level is established in conjunction with a notification level and represents the concentration of a drinking water contaminant at which additional steps beyond notification are recommended to reduce public exposure.

Regulatory Activity

State and federal lawmakers and regulators, including the US EPA and California State Water Resources Control Board, have been taking steps to develop standards and guidelines for the detection, public notification, and removal of PFAS in drinking water.

What is Liberty Doing?

Liberty is proactive about protecting public health and the environment. Liberty analyzes its water sources frequently to comply with state and federal regulations and takes steps to protect customers from exposure to contaminants of concern, including PFAS. Sources that showed the presence of PFAS are removed from service, and Liberty actively pursues appropriate treatment options.