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EPA Limits PFAS in its New Drinking Water Rules: Phelps Dunbar

This week, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized its National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) to limit the legal concentration of both several individual PFAS and total PFAS compounds in drinking water nationwide, using its authority under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

PFAS, or “forever chemicals,” are a class of long-lasting chemical compounds that accumulate in the environment and in many living organisms over time. PFAS have been linked to adverse health conditions, including increased cholesterol, changes in liver enzymes, immune system deficiencies, decreases in birth weight, and kidney and testicular cancer. While manufacturers stopped using many of the most harmful PFAS compounds years ago, thousands of PFAS are still used in a wide variety of products ranging from aqueous fire-fighting foams and ski waxes to fast-food packaging due to their water resistance, stain resistance, thermal regulation, and surfactant properties.

EPA set maximum contaminant level standards (MCLs) for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexane sulfonate (PFHxS), and GenX chemicals in parts per trillion (ppt).

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