

Town of Hopkinton

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hopkinton Reports Elevated Levels of PFAS Detected in Water Sample, Encourages Residents to Review Educational Resources

HOPKINTON — Town Manager Norman Khumalo and Water & Sewer Superintendent Eric Carty report that water from Well #6 near Fruit Street has shown slightly elevated levels of a regulated group of chemicals called PFAS. The Town of Hopkinton encourages residents to review the available [public education resources](#) provided by the town about these chemicals and noted concerns about long-term exposure.

[The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection \(DEP\)](#) adopted a strict drinking water standard in October 2020, limiting the quantities of six specific PFAS chemicals to no more than 20 parts per trillion. That limit is well below the limit set by the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) which is 70 parts per trillion.

Samples collected during an initial test in July detected PFAS levels at 20.9 parts per

trillion, and a confirmatory test in August showed 20.5 parts per trillion, making the average 20.7 parts per trillion, which is slightly above MassDEP's standards.

"While PFAS has been around for nearly half a century, we are just beginning to understand the possible adverse effects that these chemicals have on water supply systems and public health," said Town Manager Khumalo. "Recently, government agencies have instituted aggressive regulations to combat the problem, which we believe are necessary to protect people long term. I encourage every resident and business owner to read the published materials so that you can understand PFAS chemicals."

If the water violates drinking standards for a complete calendar quarter, the town will explore ways to reimburse customers.

The Town of Hopkinton is working alongside MassDEP to ensure the town's water system meets all standards and will aggressively monitor and test the wells in town. The town is investigating treatment options to mitigate PFAS levels in the water supply.

"As a whole, New England is taking very aggressive steps to mitigate the levels of these chemicals and their possible effects on public health. We will continue to monitor the wells and take the appropriate actions," said Superintendent Carty. "We are investigating corrective measures, and will keep the community informed of our progress."

The Town of Hopkinton gets its water supply from eight wells. Wells #1, #2 and #3 are located near Fruit Street; Wells #4 and #5, known as the Pond Street wells, are located off of Pond Street near Whitehall Reservoir; Well #6 is located off Fruit Street; and Wells #7 and #8 are located off Alprilla Farm Road. All of the eight wells in town were tested, as well as water that the town purchases from Ashland, but only Well #6 had levels above the MCL.

Residents are encouraged to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 28 to learn more about PFAS.

What are PFAS?

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals that includes PFOA, PFOS and GenX chemicals. These chemicals

have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe since the 1940s for stain-resistant, water-resistant and non-stick products.

These chemicals are often found in drinking water, but people are also exposed to the chemicals through consumer products and food. While the chemicals are often found in the environment and human body, prolonged exposure to certain PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects.

Recent studies indicate that people with long-term exposure to high levels of PFAS may experience potential health effects, including liver, blood, thyroid, fetal development and immune systems effects. Exposure to high levels of PFAS also may elevate the risk of certain cancers.

Drinking water can be a source of exposure in communities where these chemicals have contaminated water supplies. Such contamination is typically localized and associated with a specific facility, for example:

- an industrial facility where PFAS were produced or used to manufacture other products, or
- locations where firefighting foam was used such as oil refineries, airfields or other training facilities for firefighters

Steps Residents Can Take

It is recommended that residents in sensitive groups, including those pregnant or nursing, infants and people with compromised immune systems do not consume, drink or cook with water with elevated levels of PFAS above the MCL of 20 parts per trillion. Residents in these groups are advised to use bottled water for drinking, as well as for cooking foods that absorb water like pasta. Parents should use bottled water for infant formula, or use infant formula that does not require adding water.

Residents in non-sensitive groups may continue to consume the water. All residents concerned about exposure are advised to substitute drinking water for bottled water.

Additionally, officials report that water can be safely used for washing foods, brushing teeth, bathing and showering.

Residents should note that boiling water will not destroy PFAS, and may result in increased levels due to evaporation of the water.

Residents with concerns regarding past exposure to PFAS should visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website](#) or consult their doctor.

To view the public education information provided by the town, please click [here](#).

For questions, please contact Director of Public Works John Westerling at 508-497-9740 or jwesterling@hopkintonma.gov or 83 Wood St, Hopkinton, MA 01748.

A message from the Town of Hopkinton