

PFAS Q&A

How can consuming PFAS affect my health?

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, scientists are still learning about the health effects of exposures to mixtures of PFAS. From the CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances:

“Research suggests that high levels of certain PFAS **may**:

- Increase cholesterol levels
- Decrease how well the body responds to vaccines
- Increase the risk of thyroid disease
- Decrease fertility in women
- Increase the risk of serious conditions like high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnant women
- Lower infant birth weights; however the decrease in birth weight is small and may not affect the infant's health.”

(Source: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/TF.asp?id=1116&tid=237>)

To date, the MassDEP recommends pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants consider using bottled water that has been tested for PFAS for drinking, cooking of foods that absorb water, and to make infant formula.

For consumers of Littleton town water, remember your water meets the state guidelines for safe drinking water, with PFAS levels below the state's 20 ppt limit.

What is LWD doing to assist private well owners in the Spectacle Pond Watershed? What can I do personally to protect my health and recover any associated costs?

LWD is offering private well owners in the Spectacle Pond watershed a \$100 rebate toward the \$350 fee to send a well water sample to a laboratory for a PFAS test. LWD will collect the sample and help to interpret the laboratory results. However, private wells are the responsibility of the property owner and are regulated by the Board of Health.

Is there an in-home solution that I can install to filter PFAS?

Unfortunately, there haven't been any home water filters certified to remove PFAS below 20 parts per trillion. That doesn't mean they don't exist. The testing just hasn't been done to confirm whether they remove PFAS to those very low levels. The filter technologies that are known to remove, or at least reduce, PFAS are granular activated carbon, anion exchange and reverse osmosis. LELWD is working with the University of Massachusetts–Lowell to evaluate the ability of several home water filters to remove PFAS from Littleton's water specifically. The COVID-19 situation slowed that project, but we should still have results later this year.

Just as a reminder, if you are on town water in Littleton, PFAS levels are below 20 parts per trillion, which is the level that MassDEP has identified as being a potential health concern.

Where can I learn more about PFAS?

You can go to LELWD.COM/PFAS to read more about PFAS in Littleton, and you can follow the links on the left of that page to the CDC, EPA, and MassDEP pages on the topic. These are the official pages from all of the relevant government agencies on the topic.

Why has there been a water ban in effect? Where can I find more information about that?

For the latest water restriction information, please visit www.lclwd.com. If you have more specific questions that cannot be answered by the watering restrictions webpage, please call our main office at 978-540-2222.

How will water use be monitored during the ban and how will enforcement be handled?

LWD staff will regularly patrol the various neighborhoods in town.

1st Violation: Written warning; 2nd Violation: \$50.00 fine; 3rd Violation: \$200.00 fine; 4th Violation: \$400.00 fine and reduction in water availability to allow for basic water use needs.

Why have I been experiencing discolored water the past few days?

The temporary blending pipeline went into service this past Monday, so we are pumping water out of our Spectacle Pond Treatment Plant again for the first time in 8 months. That means the direction of water flow has reversed for much of the water distribution system. Whenever that happens, you can expect iron and manganese that has settled in the water mains to get stirred up and cause discolored water again.

Will rates be raising in the near future because of the unforeseen PFAS contamination?

Our Board of Commissioners values delivering safe and reliable water to consumers in an affordable manner. Currently, the average Littleton water user pays just under a penny per gallon (\$0.0094/g) for water delivered to their home faucet.

The reality is delivering safe and reliable water comes at a cost. The burden of solving the PFAS problem will impact our consumers, but as always, we will look to the most cost-effective solutions.

We will look to spread the rate increases over four years.

Currently, our average water user consumes 60,000 gallons of water per year and spends roughly \$47/month. Estimated rate increases over the next four years are as follows:

FY21 – Increase of \$2/month

FY22 – Increase of \$5/month

FY23 – Increase of \$4/month

FY24 – Increase of \$9/month

We estimate that the average LWD residential customer will spend about \$67/month in four years, or just over a penny per gallon (\$0.0134/g).