



CEW&SA would like to update our customers on the January 23, 2023 PFAS letter that was mailed with your billing statements and was posted on our webpage http://www.cewsa.com/documents/CustomerLetter1.23.23_000.pdf.

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) defines a water contaminant as any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substance or matter in water. The law enables the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set legal limits on the levels of certain contaminants in drinking water.

The SDWA sets a process that the EPA must follow to develop the national primary drinking water standards intended to control the level of contaminants in the nation's drinking water. The EPA currently has drinking water regulations for more than 90 contaminants.

Following years of scientific testing and evaluation, in February 2021, EPA implemented the national primary drinking water regulation development process for two PFAS contaminants, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). PFOA and PFOS are two PFAS compounds believed to have adverse health effects at very low concentrations. Because of these properties, PFOA and PFOS were phased out of production by U.S. manufacturers in the mid-2000s. However, PFOA and PFOS can still be imported into the U.S. through consumer goods. Due to decades of industrial pollution and consumer product use, they remain in some drinking water sources including wells. The EPA has stated that approximately 80% of a person's exposure to PFAS comes from consumer goods such as cookware, cosmetics, food wrappings, stain/water-resistant clothing, and carpet and furniture treatments.

On March 14, 2023, the EPA announced its proposed national drinking water standards – also known as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) – for PFOA and PFOS individually along with four other PFAS compounds as a PFAS mixture. The announcement now starts public comment and scientific review processes that will take place over the next several months. After these processes are complete, the EPA's final drinking water standards may differ from the proposed MCLs announced on March 14th.

When EPA issues the final MCLs later this year, it will also announce an effective date to allow water providers time to meet the new standards. The effective date for the final PFOA and PFOS MCLs is expected sometime in 2026.

The proposed MCLs announced on March 14th are 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOA, 4.0 parts per trillion for PFOS, and a hazard index of 1.0 for the PFAS mixture. Prior to the proposal of the MCLs, CEW&SA has conducted multiple rounds of testing for these compounds in accordance with current federal and state regulations.

We are providing a range of results because PFAS test results can vary over time. In 2022, our range of results for PFOA are 0.0-1.4 parts per trillion, PFOS are 0.0-1.8 parts per trillion, and the four other compounds are below the proposed combined MCL. All current CEW&SA results are below the proposed MCLs.

The EPA must follow the entire regulatory development process before the proposed MCLs become the final standards water utilities must meet. The currently proposed PFAS MCLs are not enforceable drinking water standards at this time. For more information about how the EPA determines their proposed and final PFAS MCLs, we invite you to visit their website: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>

In the meantime, CEW&SA will join with thousands of other water providers across the country to test for PFOA, PFOS, and 27 other PFAS compounds under the EPA's Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, also known as UCMR 5. CEW&SA was originally scheduled for 2025 testing by EPA but proactively requested they move us to a 2023 testing schedule.

UMCR 5 testing is intended to give the EPA and water providers a greater understanding of how pervasive PFAS are in our nation's drinking water. As directed under UCMR 5, CEW&SA will make our results publicly available and publish our findings in our water quality reports.

The EPA recommends public water systems that find PFAS in their drinking water take steps to inform customers, undertake additional sampling to assess the level, scope, and source of contamination, and examine steps to limit exposure.

CEW&SA will review our UCMR 5 testing results but does not expect any additional courses of action to be necessary as our current test results show that we are below the proposed MCLs. Meanwhile, we will continue to operate as we always have, as a protector of public health that delivers high-quality drinking water to your taps.

Chadwick E. Shaw, P.E.
CEW&SA General Manager