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## **PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

### **SUPPLEMENT**

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

## **ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**

### **RIDGEWOOD WATER PLANNING WATER QUALITY ZOOM COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

Our commitment to water quality includes keeping you informed about Ridgewood Water's regular maintenance, system upgrades, and compliance with new and evolving regulations for drinking water.

Ridgewood Water will hold virtual Water Quality Open Houses on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, at 6:30pm, and on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, at 12:00pm (noon). Our professional staff and technical experts will provide information and answer questions about what we're doing to provide our customers with quality drinking water. Instructions on how to participate will be posted soon on

[www.water.ridgewoodnj.net](http://www.water.ridgewoodnj.net).

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS) IN DRINKING WATER**

As your water system operator, we are voluntarily providing supplemental information beyond that which can be found in the 2020 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report (Full report can be found at <http://mods.ridgewoodnj.net/pdf/water/WQR/2020WQR.pdf>). As you may recall, we first reported on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in the September 2018 supplement, and we consider this document to be an update to that supplement. Publishing the results of our proactive monitoring was performed voluntarily, in recognition that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) was, at the time, developing guidance and criteria using assumptions on PFAS that are protective of human health for exposure over a lifetime.

NJDEP now has standards for three compounds within the PFAS class of chemicals: PFNA, PFOA, and PFOS. NJDEP first required monitoring of PFNA in Q1 of 2020.\* The requirement for monitoring of PFOA and PFOS begins in 2021.

Ridgewood Water performs monitoring for a total of 14 PFAS and reports on all results. Please read the following information so that you are aware of the current levels of PFAS in your drinking water and what Ridgewood Water is doing in compliance and voluntarily, in cooperation with NJDEP to provide you with quality drinking water. Compliance is based on compiling a running annual average, the averaging of results over the period of one year

\* Reporting of those results are required in 2020 and will be in our 2021 Annual Water Quality Report. To date, the results of Ridgewood Water's monitoring continues to meet New Jersey's safe drinking water requirements for PFNA.

### **BACKGROUND**

**What Are PFAS?** PFAS do not occur naturally but are widespread and extremely persistent in the environment. They are man-made chemicals that have been used to make carpets, clothing, paper packaging for food and cookware resistant to water, grease or stains. They are also used for firefighting at airfields and in a number of industrial processes.

**When Did Ridgewood First Test For PFAS?** As part of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Unregulated Contaminant Rule 3 (UCMR3), Ridgewood Water first collected data from its 27 active treatment plants in 2014 and 2015 to determine the general occurrence of some unregulated contaminants, including certain PFAS. UCMR3 monitoring helps the EPA and NJDEP to determine where certain contaminants occur and whether they should consider regulating those contaminants in the future. At the time, no guidance existed at the state or federal levels and sampling technology available could only reliably measure to 20 parts per trillion (ppt.), as opposed to the current detection limit of 2 ppt. Since then, both EPA and NJDEP continue to study PFAS.

**Are There Standards For PFAS?** EPA has only recommended guidance for PFAS, not regulatory requirements, which are intended to offer health-protective advice to water systems in the absence of enforceable standards. New Jersey has enacted regulations or enforceable maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for three (3) PFAS compounds: PFNA, PFOA, and PFOS. NJDEP adopted an MCL for PFNA on September 4, 2018, and MCLs for PFOA and PFOS on June 1, 2020. Information on the new regulations can be found at:

[https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/adoptions/adopt\\_20200601a.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/dep/rules/adoptions/adopt_20200601a.pdf)

Ridgewood Water applauds the EPA and NJDEP for developing drinking water guidance and criteria to proactively address the possible effects of PFAS. Links to additional information resources are on page 3.

## **PFAS Testing Results and Actions Ridgewood Water Is Taking**

- May 2016: EPA announced plans for a health advisory limit of 70 ppt., either combined or individually, for PFOA and PFOS. Based on results from UCMR3 sampling Ridgewood Water performed in 2014-15, the Carr Treatment Plant, one of its 27 plants (then active), had combined levels of PFOA and PFOS above 70 ppt. The plant was removed from the system in 2017 and the water supply met all standards for drinking water when the guidance was set.
- Late 2017: NJDEP notified Ridgewood Water of its plans to set a guidance value for PFOA. We voluntarily followed their recommended actions in preparation for the announcement. Ridgewood Water tested all treatment plants in the system for a suite of 14 PFAS compounds, including PFOA, PFOS and PFNA. Results indicated low-levels of PFOA were widespread in the system. Twenty-five of 26 tested treatment plants measured levels above the proposed NJDEP MCL for PFOA. Lower levels of PFOS were detected at or below the recently proposed NJDEP MCL. All treatment plants measured PFNA levels well below the then newly established NJDEP MCL.
- 2018: Ridgewood Water continued to proactively address PFAS levels. We voluntarily implemented a public notification campaign, including a customer mailing, presentations at municipal meetings, information on the website, and holding Community Information Sessions in each of the communities we serve for residents to learn more and ask questions.
- 2019: Ridgewood Water decided independently to add to the suite of PFAS sampled an unregulated PFAS with the trade name of GenX, used as a replacement to PFOA and PFOS in manufacturing nonstick coatings and for other purposes. In September 2019, the Carr Treatment Plant was brought back online following installation of a treatment system using granular activated carbon (GAC), a technology proven to remove all tested PFAS compounds.
- May 2020: Ridgewood Water completed its Master Treatment Plan for addressing PFAS. The plan details an operational strategy of blending water sources, and cost-efficient installation of additional treatments and maintenance to ensure water quality is the best it can be into the future. The plan was developed by engineering firm Mott MacDonald and based on expert evaluation of all available treatment methods for PFAS and assessment of our current resources. Estimated cost is about \$100 million over a 5-10 year implementation. A copy of the plan can be found on the Ridgewood Water website PFAS page.
- Ongoing:
  - Quarterly monitoring of plants for future treatment investments.
  - Determine likely PFAS sources, and potentially responsible parties to help address.
  - Communicate with wholesale providers about PFAS levels and collaborate on solutions for treatment.
  - Continue to update NJDEP and our customers.
  - Engineer treatment methods for installation at the remaining plants.
  - Continue to research new technologies and alternative treatment methods to ensure we are utilizing the most appropriate methods available. A pilot study of resin for PFAS removal is ongoing at the Prospect Treatment Facility.

## **Pursuing Cost Recovery from Responsible Parties**

Our rate payers should not bear the cost of these impacts. Ridgewood Water did not cause the contamination in the natural aquifer that is the source of some of our water. The Village of Ridgewood hired the law firm of Sher Edling LLP on 11/28/18 to determine a path to recover from potential polluters the significant costs of meeting New Jersey's PFAS regulations. A motion to seek damages was filed in Bergen County Superior Court on 2/25/19. We will continue to keep customers informed of our progress. A full copy of the complaint can be found on our website at:

**Science and Technology Continue to Evolve**

Significant improvements in technology allow for water systems to test for compounds at much lower levels than previously possible. As technology has advanced, contaminants we used to measure in the millions can now be measured in billions, or in some cases as low as the trillions. Enhanced capabilities permit detection down to as low as 2 parts per trillion. Unregulated contaminants that have been present in the water supply for years are only now being evaluated because of enhanced testing capabilities. For that reason, Ridgewood Water considers it imperative to participate in unregulated contaminant testing to proactively improve water quality and maintain safe drinking water standards.

**Ridgewood Water’s Sampling Results - All Levels Shown Are in Parts Per Trillion (ppt)**

While we are actively working to address levels now, only results collected in 2021 and beyond would be considered to determine potential NJDEP violations of the maximum contaminant level (MCL). An MCL violation is based on a Running Annual Average and once exceeded we must take corrective action within one year of the violation. If a violation does occur, a public notice will be sent to residents.

**Ridgewood Water’s Sampling Results**  
*All levels shown are in parts per trillion (ppt).*

Contaminant	NJDEP Guidance/MCL	EPA Health Advisory Levels	Levels Detected in Ridgewood Water*
PFOA	14 Established June 2020	70 ** (Non-enforceable guidance) Announced in May 2016	Range = ND*** – 32.7 System Average = 24.3 (4 Rounds)
PFOS	13 Established June 2020	70 ** (Non-enforceable guidance) Announced in May 2016	Range = ND*** – 30.5 System Average = 10.07 (4 Rounds)
PFNA	13 Established September 2018	None Established	Range = ND*** – 3.52 System Average = 1.39 (4 Rounds)

\* Test results through Dec. 2020

\*\* EPA health advisory levels for PFOA and PFOS is a maximum of 70 ppt either individually or combined.

\*\*\* ND = non detectable

**Helpful Resources**

While the technology exists to measure smaller and smaller amounts of emerging contaminants, the science of understanding the meaning of those levels is still evolving. Because PFAS compounds are widespread in the environment, many organizations are working to better understand how exposure to them might affect people’s health. Here are links to a few additional resources

[https://www.state.nj.us/health/ceohs/documents/pfas\\_drinking%20water.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf)

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/pfas>

<http://info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/>

EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline: (800) 426-4791

**Ridgewood Water remains committed to providing our customers with high-quality drinking water.**

For more information on how Ridgewood Water is working to provide customers with a quality water supply, please visit our website at [water.ridgewoodnj.net](http://water.ridgewoodnj.net) and participate in one of our upcoming Drinking Water Quality Virtual Open Houses. Event dates, times and instructions on how to participate will soon be posted to our website.

Please share this information with other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by Ridgewood Water, PWSID# NJ0251001. This Notification was distributed on or about February 12, 2021.