PFAS FAQs

Posted: September 13, 2021

This page will be updated as appropriate to reflect new information learned and received by Ridgewood Water, and to share answers to frequently asked questions Ridgewood Water receives from its customers.

Ridgewood Water's Commitment to Water Quality

Ridgewood Water's commitment to providing our community with high-quality water is unwavering. Whenever there is a need for treatment, we invest what is necessary to ensure that we deliver high quality drinking water to our customers.

What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") are a group of man-made chemicals that includes PFOA, PFOS, GenX, and many others. PFAS have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries in the United States, and around the globe, since the 1940s. PFOA and PFOS have been the most extensively produced and studied of these chemicals. Both chemicals are very persistent in the environment and in the human body—meaning they don't break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects. The two prominent PFAS compounds found in the Ridgewood Water groundwater sources are PFOA and PFOS.

How long have PFAS been in the water supply?

Significant improvements in analytical testing allow for drinking water systems to identify and test for compounds at much lower levels than previously possible. As technology has advanced, contaminants we used to measure in the parts per million can now be measured, through enhanced testing capabilities, in parts per billion, or in some cases as low as parts per trillion. As regulation of PFAS compounds has increased alongside enhanced testing capabilities Ridgewood is now required to and is able to test for these compounds at the lowest levels possible. For that reason, Ridgewood Water tests for currently unregulated emerging contaminants to proactively and continuously improve water quality.

What are the likely sources of the PFAS?

PFAS have been manufactured and used in a variety of industrial processes and consumer products since the 1940s. They have also been used historically in certain firefighting foams, principally at airfields, military facilities, and fire training facilities.

While Ridgewood Water is working to identify specific sources of its PFAS contamination, we continue to strongly encourage NJDEP to take action to investigate possible PFAS contamination sources so that our customers and rate-payers do not have to bear the enormous cost burden alone for treating contamination caused by the actions and operations -- past or present -- of others.

What are the levels of PFAS detected in Ridgewood Water's Wells?

All levels are in Parts Per Trillion (ppt).

Contaminant	NJDEP Maximum Contaminant Level	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
** US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) health advisory levels for PFOA and PFOS is a maximum of 70 ppt either individually, or combined.
*** ND- non detectable.

To view the most current drinking water quality data collected by Ridgewood Water click here and then use the Chemical Results tab:
NJDEP-Drinking WaterWatch (state.nj.us)

Is my drinking water safe?

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) standards in place aim to protect individuals regardless of age, and are based on possible impacts on the single most vulnerable members of the population, including immune-compromised individuals, infants, pregnant people, or elderly individuals. The levels were also developed to be protective over an individual's lifetime of exposure to drinking water at these levels. Actions being taken within the state, by Ridgewood Water and other water purveyors, are expected to continue to reduce levels of exposure. Exposure to PFAS is primarily through ingestion. Exposure to PFAS through other household uses like showering, bathing, laundry and dishwashing is not significant.

For any questions about health concerns potentially associated with PFAS levels measured in the water, please consult your healthcare provider.

What actions has Ridgewood Water taken thus far to safeguard my drinking water?

Ridgewood Water has taken the following steps to address PFAS contamination:

- Installed treatment at the Carr Treatment Plant, which had the greatest potential to introduce PFAS compounds into the system. A treatment system using granular activated carbon (GAC), a technology proven to effectively reduce PFAS compound levels, has been operational since September 2019, removing PFOA and PFOS compounds from the water to non-detect levels.
- Completed a Master Plan, which included a full-scale PFAS and water system study, to enable the installation of treatment at the remaining system treatment plants, requiring consolidation of the system from 31 plants to 12. The Master Plan can be found on the Ridgewood Water website at https://water.ridgewoodnj.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Ridgewood-PFAS-Planning-and-Treatment-Study.pdf, and was developed by a state licensed professional engineering firm. The second treatment plant has been publicly bid and construction should begin by November 2021. The remaining ten new treatment plants are all under design, with the six largest locations scheduled for construction starts in 2022. The last of the twelve plants is scheduled to be operational by 2026.
- Initiated evaluation of alternate treatment methods in an effort to reduce installation and maintenance costs related to future treatment.
- Instituted quarterly monitoring to identify PFAS levels and minimize exposure by prioritizing delivery of water from wells that have the lowest concentrations.
- Following the science to determine likely PFAS sources, and the potentially responsible parties who should be responsible for helping to reduce levels in our ground water sources.
- Communicating with wholesale providers about their PFAS levels and collaborating on solutions for treatment.
- Continuing to report levels and actions being taken to NJDEP and our customers.
- Seeking all avenues of cost recovery, to limit costs to the consumer, including legal action, insurance, grant funding, and partnerships.

Are there home filters that work to reduce PFOA and PFOS levels?

Granular activated carbon filtration, reverse osmosis, or a combination of the two have been found to reduce the levels of PFOA and PFOS. NSF International has certified certain home use drinking water treatment units that reduce PFOA and PFOS. For a list of NSF International-certified products, please consult the links below:

http://info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/Listings.asp?ProductFunction=P473%7CP

http://www.nsf.org/consumer-resources/

NSF International was formerly known as the National Sanitation Foundation. It is a not-for-profit organization that provides public health and safety risk management solutions. Among those solutions, NSF International provides standards development and product certification.

Where can I learn more about PFAS?

Ridgewood Water encourages its customers to visit the following resources for additional information.

New Jersey Department of Health
http://www.state.nj.us/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
https://www.nj.gov/dep/srp/emerging-contaminants/

Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry
https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html

USEPA
http://www.epa.gov/pfas

American Water Works Association
PFAS | American Water Works Association (awwa.org)

I have a question that was not answered in this document. What should I do?

If you have additional questions or concerns, please feel free to email waterquality@ridgewoodnj.net or cswater@ridgewoodnj.net

How can I have my tap water tested?

The following laboratories are identified by NJDEP as PFOA & PFOS – certified for drinking water testing:

Burlington County				
Lab Number	**Lab Name**	**Contact Name**	**Contact Phone Number**	**Matrix**
03036	EMSL ANALYTICAL INC	NICHOLAS STRACCIONE	856-303-2546	Drinking Water
Essex County				
Lab Number	**Lab Name**	**Contact Name**	**Contact Phone Number**	**Matrix**
07010	AQUA PRO-TECH LABORATORIES	BRIAN WOOD	973-227-0422	Drinking Water
Mercer County				
Lab Number	**Lab Name**	**Contact Name**	**Contact Phone Number**	**Matrix**

11036	NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH	ZHIHUA (TINA) FAN	609-530-2803	Drinking Water

Morris County

Lab Number	Lab Name	Contact Name	Contact Phone Number	Matrix
14013	AGRA ENVIRONMENTAL AND LABORATORY SERVICES	MICHAEL FURREY	973-989-0010	Drinking Water

Out Of State

Lab Number	Lab Name	Contact Name	Contact Phone Number	Matrix
CA003	VISTA ANALYTICAL LABORATORY	MARTHA MAIER	916-673-1520	Drinking Water
CA005	EUROFINS TESTAMERICA SACRAMENTO	LISA STAFFORD	916-374-4308	Drinking Water
CA008	EUROFINS EATON ANALYTICAL, LLC (MONROVIA)	NILDA COX	626-386-1170	Drinking Water
CA015	WECK LABORATORIES INC	AGUSTIN PIERRI, Ph.D.	626-336-2139	Drinking Water
FL002	SGS NORTH AMERICA INC. - ORLANDO	SVETLANA IZOSIMOVA	407-425-6700	Drinking Water
FL022	PACE ANALYTICAL SERVICES, LLC ORMOND BEACH FL	LYNN BAYLOR	386-676-4803	Drinking Water
IL457	AMERICAN WATER CENTRAL LABORATORY	WILLIAM DECKELMANN	618-222-4053	Drinking Water
IN598	EUROFINS EATON ANALYTICAL, LLC (SOUTH BEND)	DALE PIECHOCKI	574-472-5523	Drinking Water
MA007	CONTEST, A PACE ANALYTICAL LABORATORY	KATHERINE ALLEN	413-525-2332	Drinking Water
MA015	ALPHA ANALYTICAL	AMY RICE	508-898-9220	Drinking Water
MI015	ALS ENVIRONMENTAL	CHAD STOIKE	616-582-5203	Drinking Water
MN002	PACE ANALYTICAL SERVICES, LLC - MINNEAPOLIS MN	JANIELLE WARD	612-607-6352	Drinking Water
NC018	ENTHALPY ANALYTICAL,LLC	VALGENA RESPASS	919-850-4392	Drinking Water
NC100	SGS NORTH AMERICA INC.	JEANNIE MILHOLLAND	910-350-1903	Drinking Water
PA007	AQUA PENNSYLVANIA INC	ANTHONY NGUYEN	610-645-1063	Drinking Water
PA011	EUROFINS LANCASTER LABS ENVIRONMENT TESTING	DOROTHY LOVE	717-556-7327	Drinking Water
SC002	GEL LABORATORIES, LLC	NANCY D MATTERN	843-556-8171	Drinking Water
SC006	PACE ANALYTICAL SERVICES - WEST COLUMBIA	KELLY NANCE	803-227-2702	Drinking Water
WA005	ALS ENVIRONMENTAL, KELSO	KURT CLARKSON	360-577-7222	Drinking Water