



# Township of Abington

138 Central Avenue  
North Hills, PA 19038  
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Michael Thompson  
Commissioner – Ward 6

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## Abington Township Resident Public Water Frequently Asked Questions Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS)

Two types of Perfluoroalkyls (PFAS) compounds, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) have been found present in Abington Township public water. There is **no maximum** contaminant level (MCL) for PFAS, as PFAS are **not regulated** by the federal or state government as of August 2018. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has placed a “lifetime health advisory level” of 70 parts per trillion (PPT) for a combined limit for two members of the PFAS family, PFOA and PFOS. The EPA’s “lifetime health advisory level” does not require these chemicals be tested for or remediated if found. Any actions taken to limit the amount of PFAS in public water is at the discretion of the public water provider.

In July 2018, the EPA held a Community Engagement Session at Horsham Township to discuss PFOA and PFOS which were commonly used in firefighting training at the NAS Willow Grove in Horsham and Naval Air Warfare Center in Warminster. This session discussed a **draft report**, *Toxicological Profile for Perfluoroalkyls*, by the Centers for Disease Control, via the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) which proposes significant reductions to the health advisory levels of these chemicals.

At a public officials meeting hosted by Aqua PA on August 28, 2018, Aqua PA stated they will take the lead on being a source of information for PFAS. Aqua PA will be using their website, <http://www.waterfacts.com> to host information related to PFAS and are encouraging residents to register to receive email updates. Registration can be found on the right-hand side of this page: <http://www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/>. For specific public water questions, we ask you contact your public water provider, Aqua PA, at 877-987-2782 or [custservreply@AquaAmerica.com](mailto:custservreply@AquaAmerica.com).

*All of Abington Township public water is supplied through Aqua Pennsylvania (Aqua PA). The Township has no authority or jurisdiction over Aqua PA or its water systems. Aqua PA is a publicly traded holding company regulated through the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. This document, “Abington Township Resident Public Water Frequently Asked Questions,” is for informational purposes only.*



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## 1. What are PFOA and PFOS?

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) are fluorinated organic chemicals that are human made. They have been manufactured and used in various industries across the world since the 1940's. These chemicals can be found in products such as cookware, clothing, carpets, furniture, cleaning products and firefighting foam. Although there has been a significant reduction in the use of these chemicals, they are commonly found in the environment where they breakdown slowly. To learn more about PFAS visit the EPA's page, *Basic Information of PFA's* and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry page, *Perfluoroalkyls*, in our referenced items and resources section below.

## 2. How did PFOS and PFAO get into the water system?

The EPA began to monitor PFAS in the late 1990's. By 2009, the EPA ruled that the health advisory level of PFOA was 400 parts per trillion (PPT) and 200 PPT for PFOS, or a combined 600 PPT. In 2016, after further study and analysis of health impacts, the EPA accepted a reduced combined health advisory level of 70 PPT. It is important to note that the "health advisory level" is not a regulation and cannot be enforced. The ATSDR report issued this past June reduces that level further, by a factor of 10. That report, which can be found in the Referenced Items and Resources section below, is still in the public comment phase.

Since late 2016, Aqua PA has been voluntarily testing its wells for PFOS and PFOA, and making those levels available to the public via [www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/](http://www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/). All wells in Aqua PA's systems have remained under the 70 PPT health advisory levels, although all wells positively test for varying levels of PFOA and PFOS contamination.

The greatest concentration of these chemicals was found in the North Hills well resulting in it being taken offline on by Aqua PA on July 27, 2018. North Hills is now being serviced from Aqua PA's Abington well, which has considerably lower levels of PFOS and PFOA contaminants. According to Aqua, the general assumption at this time is that a plume of PFOS and PFOA contaminants originating from their use at the military bases mentioned above have migrated south within the underground aquifers that feed our area.

## 3. What is the currently recommended level for PFOA or PFOS by the EPA?

There is currently no regulation at the federal or state level for PFAS. However, in 2009 the EPA established Health Advisory Levels (HAL) for two PFAS chemicals: PFOA and PFOS. The EPA's lifetime health advisory for PFOA and PFOS was changed in 2016 to 70 parts per trillion (PPT) for combined concentrations. The EPA established this advisory to offer a margin of protection against adverse health effects to the most sensitive populations, fetuses during pregnancy and breastfed infants. The advisory level was based on the best available health peer-reviewed studies on exposure of PFASs, although it cannot be enforced.



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Recently, the Centers for Disease Control, via the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) released a report called *Toxicological Profile for Perfluoroalkyls*. This report reduces the existing 70 PPT advisory level. This report is still in the comment period and has not yet been adopted by the EPA. Information regarding ATSDR's recommendations can be found at [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/mrl\\_pfas.html](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/mrl_pfas.html).

#### 4. Is my water safe?

The EPA health advisory level currently stands at 70 PPT since 2016, and no sources feeding Abington Township have tested in exceedance of that. However, ATSDR's most recent report proposes the recommended advisory level be further reduced. Although the Township appears to be yielding PFOA and PFOS test results below the currently adopted EPA health advisory level of 70 PPT, some sources appear to be above the proposed reduction cited in the ATSDR's recent report.

We encourage you to consult whatever expert you believe can answer this question for you as an individual as we continue to seek clarification from our state and federal regulatory agencies. The Township firmly believes that PFAS chemicals in our water system are unacceptable. We are working with our neighboring communities and State and Federal legislators to advocate for Aqua PA to make immediate improvements and filter installations that reduce these chemicals to non-detectable levels in our drinking water. We have included a section of referenced items and resources below for your own exploration and ultimate determination.

#### 5. How can I find out what the PFOA and PFOS level are at wells servicing Abington Township?

To view past and current readings, please visit Aqua PA's website at <http://www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/> and select the well of interest to you.

#### 6. Will I be notified if the North Hills well is turned back on?

Aqua has informed us that their **ultimate goal** to permanently take the North Hills well offline or to install treatment before turning the well back on. In the meantime, the well will only be turned back on if there is need to meet excessive demands such as fire, droughts or other similar reasons. In the unlikely event the well is turned back on, we have requested and Aqua PA has agreed to immediately inform the Township so we can ensure we can notify residents and businesses.

The Township will post an update on our website at <http://www.abington.org/> and provide a link to the information on our Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AbingtonTownship> if this occurs. Aqua will also post



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information on their website, <http://www.waterfacts.com>. You can also sign-up to receive updates from Aqua by entering and submitting your email in the form on the right-hand side of this page <http://www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/>.

**7. What was the level of PFOA and PFOS in the North Hills Well prior to it be taken offline?**

The last test performed by Aqua PA prior to the North Hills well being taken offline showed a concentration of 3.1 PPT for PFOA and 40 PPT for PFOS for a combined total of 43.1 PPT. This is below the current EPA's health advisory of 70 PPT. To see past monitoring results please visit Aqua's website at: <http://www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/north-hills/>.

**8. How can I find out what Aqua PA well I receive water from?**

At present, Aqua PA has notified the Township that residents northwest of Easton Road are serviced by the Abington Well. Residents southeast of Easton Road are serviced by Neshaminy Treated Water.

**9. What are the side-effects to being exposed to PFOA and PFOS?**

The information surrounding PFOA and PFOS side effects is unclear and is continuing to evolve. A health-care professional should be contacted to learn more about the side effects and treatments.

**10. Can Aqua PA remove the PFAS compounds from the public water?**

Our neighbors in Warminster and Horsham Townships had similar issues in 2014. Both Townships' Water Authorities have installed Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filters on their wells. These filters have reduced the levels of PFOS and PFOA compounds to nearly non-detectable limits. Both Townships are also experimenting with ionized resin filters, which take up less space, and are also yielding non-detect levels.

**11. I have well water. What should I do?**

In order to determine the quality of your well water, we recommend you follow the information provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP). A link to their *Water Testing* page and *Well Testing Information Sheet* can be found in the referenced items and resources section below.

**12. What can I do in the interim?**

First and foremost, we ask that our residents and businesses exercise their best judgement regarding the safety of the public water system based upon the information available. If you remain concerned, there are options that you may pursue. These include the purchase of in-house water filtration. Filtration can be installed either to serve your entire residence, or simply your kitchen sink. If you are interested in this, we recommend that you purchase a



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system that is compliant with National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) protocol P473. Alternatively, residents may purchase bottled water at their nearest grocery store.

Additionally, we ask that you join us in advocating that federal and state law makers and regulatory bodies require Aqua PA to install filtration systems that will reduce our PFA levels to non-detectable and the passing of Pennsylvania House Bill 705 which mandates that the maximum combined level of these compounds not exceed 5 PPT. Please contact your U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, PA Senator, PA Representative, Aqua, EPA, PA DEP, and the PA Public Utility Commission and make them aware of your water quality concerns and the need to take action immediately.

### **13. How do I stay informed?**

At a public officials meeting hosted by Aqua PA on August 28, 2018, Aqua PA stated they will take the lead on being a source of information for PFAS. Aqua PA maintains <http://www.waterfacts.com> with information regarding PFAS and their water supply. They also have an email registration that allows registrees to receive updated information. Registration can be found on the right-hand side of this page: <http://www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/>.

The Township will be posting updates we receive to our website at <http://www.abington.org/>. You can also follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/AbingtonTownship> where we will be linking to information as it is posted to the website.

### **14. Have a question that is not found here?**

Contact Aqua, PA directly by submitting a question at <http://www.waterfacts.com/contact/> or by calling 877-987-2782. The Township has been assured that public questions will be answered timely by Aqua's matter experts.



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## Referenced Items and Resources:

- **United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
  - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS):
    - <https://www.epa.gov/pfas>
  - Basic Information on PFAS:
    - <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas>
  - Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFOA and PFOS:
    - <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
  - Fact Sheet on PFOA and PFOS Drinking Water Health Advisories (November 2016):
    - <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>
  - EPA Document, Drinking Water Health Advisory for Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA):
    - [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-05/documents/pfoa\\_health\\_advisory\\_final\\_508.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-05/documents/pfoa_health_advisory_final_508.pdf)
  - Private Drinking Water Wells Main Page:
    - <https://www.epa.gov/privatewells>
  
- **Center for Disease Control's, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry**
  - Perfluoroalkyls:
    - <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/toxsubstance.asp?toxid=237>
  - Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and Your Health:
    - <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>
  - DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: Toxicological Profile for Perfluoroalkyls:
    - <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp200.pdf>
  - ASTDR's Minimal Risks Levels (MRLs) and Environmental Media Evaluation Guides (EMEGs) for PFAS
    - [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/mrl\\_pfas.html](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/mrl_pfas.html)
  - PFAS Toxicological Report Profile Key Messages:
    - [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/docs/PFAS\\_Public\\_KeyMessages\\_June20\\_Final-508.pdf](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/docs/PFAS_Public_KeyMessages_June20_Final-508.pdf)
  - PFAS Frequently Asked Questions (ToxFAQ's™):
    - <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/TF.asp?id=1116&tid=237>
  - Perfluoroalkyls- ToxFAQs™:
    - <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts200.pdf>
  
- **Pennsylvania, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**
  - PFOA and PFOS: What are They:
    - [https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/drinking\\_water/Perfluorinated%20Chemicals%20%E2%80%93PFOA](https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/drinking_water/Perfluorinated%20Chemicals%20%E2%80%93PFOA)



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[%20and%20PFOS%20%E2%80%93%20in%20Pennsylvania/Pages/default.aspx](#)

- Information Sheet:
  - <http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/DrinkingWater/Perfluorinated%20Chemicals/PA%20DEP%27s%20PFC%20Information%20Sheet.pdf>
- Water Testing:
  - <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/PrivateWells/Pages/Water-Testing.aspx>
- Well Testing Information:
  - <http://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/SERO/SEROPortalFiles/Community%20Info/EastonRoadPFC/Well%20Testing%20-PFCs.pdf>
- **Pennsylvania Department of Health**
  - Information Sheet:
    - <http://files.dep.state.pa.us/RegionalResources/SERO/SEROPortalFiles/Community%20Info/EastonRoadPFC/PA%20Department%20of%20Health%20Fact%20Sheet-%20PFOS%20and%20PFOA.pdf>
- **Aqua, Pennsylvania**
  - Aqua America Website:
    - <https://www.aquaamerica.com/our-states/pennsylvania.aspx>
  - Aqua PA WaterFacts, information on test results and more related to PFOA and PFOS:
    - <http://www.waterfacts.com/>
  - Aqua, PA Water Facts, PFOA/PFOS Monitoring Page:
    - <http://www.waterfacts.com/monitoring/>
- **Montgomery County Department of Health**
  - Per-or Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Drinking Water Page:
    - <https://www.montcopa.org/2587/Per--or-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-PFAS>
- **Horsham Township**
  - “Drinking Water Information & Contacts” Pages:
    - <https://www.horsham.org/pview.aspx?id=33675&catid=612>
- **Upper Dublin Township**
  - Public Water Quality:
    - <https://www.upperdublin.net/statement-on-public-water/>