



Water Production Bureau

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January 31, 2022

Re: IL EPA Drinking Water Sampling (PFAS)

Dear Water System Customer,

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) recently tested our water system for compounds known as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) as part of a statewide investigation of community water supplies. PFAS are a group of thousands of manmade substances that have been produced in the United States since the 1940s and utilized for a variety of applications ranging from water and stain-proofing to firefighting. Some PFAS have been phased out of production due to environmental and human health concerns, yet they persist in the environment and may contaminate surface and ground waters.

Neither the Illinois EPA nor the U.S. EPA have yet developed enforceable drinking water standards for PFAS. In the interim, Illinois EPA has developed health-based guidance levels for the small number of PFAS for which there is appropriate information to do so. The health-based guidance levels are intended to be protective of all people consuming the water over a lifetime of exposure. **It is important to understand that health-based guidance levels are not regulatory limits for drinking water.** Rather, the health-based guidance levels are benchmarks against which sampling results are compared to determine if additional investigation or other response action is necessary.

PFAS IN EVANSTON

Illinois EPA testing has determined that one PFAS chemical was detected in the City's drinking water just above the Illinois EPA Health-Based Guidance Level of 2.0 ppt for PFOA (The lowest concentration the laboratory can reliably detect is 2.0 ppt). **As a frame of reference, one part per trillion is roughly the equivalent of one drop in 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools.** The levels detected for PFOA were 2.2 ppt (9/2/2021), 2.3 ppt (11/16/2021), and 2.2 ppt (11/16/2021).

Communities along the west shore of Lake Michigan are seeing similar results at about 2 ppt on average.

| City of Evanston PFAS Testing Results | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Date | City of Evanston Drinking Water | |
| | PFOS IEPA Guidance Level 14.0 (ppt) US EPA Guidance Level 70.0 (ppt) | PFOA IEPA Guidance Level 2.0 (ppt) US EPA Guidance Level 70.0 (ppt) |
| 9/2/2021 | 2.4 ppt | 2.2 ppt |
| 11/16/2021 | *2.3 ppt | *2.3 ppt |
| 11/16/2021 | **2.2 ppt | **2.2 ppt |

*indicates confirmation sample results, **indicates duplicate confirmation sample results

The concentrations detected in City water are well below the US EPA published Lifetime Health Advisory Level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt). Notably, both the US EPA Lifetime Health Advisory Levels and Illinois EPA Health-Based Guidance Levels are measured in ppt, where many drinking water compounds are measured in parts per billion (ppb).

Our water may contain other PFAS at concentrations greater than or equal to the lowest concentration the laboratory can reliably detect, known as the minimum reporting level. However, neither the Illinois EPA nor the U.S. EPA currently have health-based guidance levels for these additional compounds. Results can also be found on the PFAS Investigation Network Interactive Map webpage:

<https://illinois-epa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/d304b513b53941c4bc1be2c2730e75cf>.

PFAS are present in many consumer goods, including food packaging and personal care products, and scientists have found values of PFAS in blood of nearly all individuals tested. Exposure to high levels of PFAS may cause adverse health effects such as increased cholesterol levels, increased risk for thyroid disease, low infant birth weights, reduced response to vaccines, pregnancy-induced hypertension and increased risk of liver and kidney cancer as seen in studies of laboratory animals. **Exposure to PFAS above the recommended health-based guidance levels does not necessarily mean that a person will get sick or an adverse health effect will occur.** Health-based guidance levels are conservative estimates. The possible health effects from PFAS are dependent on how much a person is exposed to and how long they are exposed to it. Exposure to PFAS above recommended health-based guidance levels for periods of time may mean that a person is at a greater risk of experiencing these adverse effects.

NEXT STEPS

The City is following recommendations from the Illinois EPA and closely monitoring the latest health-based guidance. We will continue monitoring PFAS values through quarterly sampling at the direction of the Illinois EPA. The most recent test results will be added to the above chart on the City's PFAS webpage once available.

We will begin evaluating treatment options to reduce public exposure to PFAS in potable water provided by the Evanston Water Utility. The City will continue to closely monitor the situation and ensure information is communicated with community members and wholesale water customers.

Based on these initial results, Evanston will perform additional sampling beginning January 2022 and will keep the community updated and informed.

Additional information regarding PFAS, the statewide PFAS investigation network, and the impact to public health can be found in the attached fact sheet as well as on the Illinois EPA PFAS webpage:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/water-quality/pfas/Pages/default.aspx>.

The confirmed sampling results for the Evanston Water Utility are also available on Illinois EPA's Drinking Water Watch system at

<http://water.epa.state.il.us/dww/index.jsp>.

If you have questions, please contact:

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