

THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

Dec. 5, 2024

University of Rhode Island Faculty, Staff, and Students:

The Rhode Island PFAS in Drinking Water, Groundwater, and Surface Waters Act from 2022 and amended in 2023 requires public water systems in Rhode Island to regularly sample for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The new law set an interim standard for PFAS in drinking water of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) for a total of six PFAS chemicals.

Last fall we shared that the University was embarking on an aggressive strategy to eliminate per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from the campus drinking water supply. This effort prioritizes community health and complies with new State of Rhode Island legislation regarding drinking water standards related to PFAS.

In October, we achieved a major milestone in our efforts to remove PFAS from our water supply. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) approved the activation of phase one of our new drinking water PFAS filtration system.

The new system removes PFAS to levels significantly below the new legislatively mandated threshold of 20 parts per trillion.

Our most recent testing indicated no detectable presence of PFAS in our campus drinking water.

According to RIDOH, our new filtration system is the first municipal-level PFAS filtration system in the state of Rhode Island.

We continue to test the campus drinking water regularly. We will continue to share quarterly updates regarding ongoing PFAS monitoring, and our water quality reports are available at uri.edu/facilities/utilities/.

The results are listed in the attached public notice, also available at uri.edu/pfas-information.

For more information about PFAS and answers to frequently asked questions, visit the Rhode Island Department of Health site at health.ri.gov/healthrisks/contaminants/about/pfas/.

PUBLIC NOTICE
IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Water Supplied by:

PWS #RI1858422
University of Rhode Island

We routinely test drinking water for substances that can harm health, including PFAS. If PFAS are found above a certain level, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) requires public water systems to advise people not to drink the water.

Our most recent testing indicated no detectable presence of PFAS in our Kingston Campus drinking water.

Six PFAS chemicals are regulated in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island interim drinking water standard (the highest level allowed) for PFAS is 20 parts per trillion (ppt). This means that the total amount of the six PFAS chemicals (sum) measured in a drinking water system cannot be higher than 20 ppt. The six PFAS chemicals are PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid), PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid), PFHxS (perfluorohexane sulfonic acid), PFHpA (perfluoroheptanoic acid), PFNA (perfluorononanoic acid), and PFDA (perfluorodecanoic acid). These limits were established by Rhode Island statute (RI Gen. Laws 46-32).

PFAS test results for University of Rhode Island:

Water provided to the campus (TP004-PFAS2): **non-detect (no detectable presence of PFAS)**

About the PFAS test results

Public water systems were required to take PFAS samples by July 1, 2023. The PFAS sampling results are used to determine how often a public water system must monitor for PFAS in the future. If the results show no detections of PFAS, the public water system will monitor for PFAS every two years. If the results show PFAS at or below the 20 ppt interim standard for drinking water, the water system will monitor for PFAS each year. If the results show PFAS exceeds the 20 ppt interim standard, the water system will monitor for PFAS quarterly (once every three months).

Where do PFAS come from?

PFAS are found in many different products that are made to repel water, grease, or stains, like carpets, clothing, non-stick pans, paints, polishes, waxes, cleaning products, and food packaging. Firefighters and the military use them in fire-suppressing foam to fight fires involving gasoline or oil. PFAS can enter the soil, air, and water from many sources, including when products containing PFAS are used, thrown away, or burned. PFAS can last in the environment for a long time.

How are people exposed to PFAS?

Nearly everyone has a low level of PFAS in their blood. People can be exposed to PFAS by eating food, drinking water, accidentally swallowing dust, or breathing air polluted with PFAS. When people are exposed, PFAS can build up in the body. The amount of PFAS in the body can increase to the point where it can harm health.

What are the health effects of PFAS?

Studies have shown certain PFAS can cause negative health effects, including higher cholesterol levels, lower infant birth weights, weakened immune response, and an increased risk of some cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers. The more PFAS you are exposed to through higher drinking water levels and/or other sources, the more PFAS will eventually accumulate (build up) in your body and the greater the risk of health effects developing over time. Infants and young children with developing immune systems; people who are breastfeeding, pregnant, or who may become pregnant; and people with compromised immune systems are particularly at risk. Learn more about PFAS at health.ri.gov/pfas.

What is being done?

- The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff members are our concern. We have taken and continue to take steps to lower PFAS levels in our drinking water.
- We have executed a consent agreement with RIDOH that documents our plan of action to address PFAS levels by an achievable and realistic deadline.
- We test the water supply at least quarterly for PFAS.
- We have installed point-of-use filtration systems, aimed at reducing PFAS levels, at multiple locations throughout the Kingston Campus.
- We have activated a new water treatment facility to reduce PFAS to levels well below the Rhode Island interim drinking water standard.
- We have developed a dedicated PFAS website that includes information about PFAS and answers to frequently asked questions.

For questions about the University's water system not addressed by the above referenced sources, please contact Matthew Simeone, water system manager, at matthew_simeone@uri.edu.

Please share this information with all the 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
University of Rhode Island, PWS ID#: RI 1858422
60 Tootell Rd., Kingston, RI 02881
401-874-4206
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