



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Potable Well Sampling – Expanded Site Investigation Area

#### 1. What is a potable well?

The term “potable well” refers to a well that is used as a water source for drinking water and cooking. Potable wells have different construction standards than some other wells such as irrigation wells or livestock wells. Most wells connected to a family residence are potable wells.

#### 2. Why is the DNR conducting potable well sampling?

The DNR is conducting potable well sampling due to potential risk associated with per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS). A large source of PFAS contamination in groundwater has been identified at and in the vicinity of the JCI/Tyco Fire Technology Center on Industrial Avenue in Marinette, and the JCI/Tyco facilities on Stanton Street in Marinette. The total size of the area with groundwater contamination (also referred to as extent of groundwater contamination) is currently unknown.

To better understand the extent of PFAS contamination in groundwater and potential exposure to the community, the DNR is sampling potable wells to ensure that community residents have accurate information regarding potential PFAS in their potable wells that may contain PFAS from contaminated groundwater.

#### 3. What will the DNR be testing my water for?

The DNR will be testing drinking water for 36 PFAS compounds. PFAS are a large group of human-made chemicals that have been used in industry, firefighting foams, and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s.

#### 4. Where, specifically, is the DNR conducting potable well sampling in Marinette, Peshtigo, and surrounding communities?

The DNR is conducting potable well sampling in an area defined as the [Expanded Site Investigation Area](#). The Expanded Site Investigation Area is an area where potable well sampling has not yet occurred. The Expanded Site Investigation Area is bound by the bay of Green Bay (east), Leaf Road (south), Pleasant View Road (west), and Municipality Boundary & Menominee River (north). The DNR will survey parcel owners within this area to determine which properties contain potable wells to be sampled.

#### 5. How was the Expanded Site Investigation Area determined?

The [Expanded Site Investigation Area](#) encompasses areas where PFAS detections were found in potable wells tested by local community members, as well as areas where foam sightings have occurred.

#### 6. Will every well in the Expanded Site Investigation Area be sampled?

Properties with a potable well or sand point well that is used as a drinking water supply will be sampled. Sampling will occur at any property where the landowner agrees to allow access to their property for sampling by completing and submitting the *Potable Well Survey* and *Access Permission Agreement* to DNR. Irrigation wells or other non-potable wells will not be included in the sampling



effort. Any properties with wells that are used for dual purposes (e.g., wells used for irrigation and drinking water supply) will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

**7. Will sampling occur outside the Expanded Site Investigation Area?**

Not at this time. However, if a homeowner or well owner outside the Expanded Site Investigation Area has sample data from their potable well indicating PFAS detections or exceedances beyond recommended DHS standards, DNR will review the available information and may consider additional steps on a case-by-case basis. Sample results can be emailed to [DNRJCI PFAS@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRJCI PFAS@wisconsin.gov). You can also call the DNR regarding sample results at **1-888-626-3244**.

**8. Will the sampling area expand based on results?**

The sampling area will expand as necessary if results from this study and studies conducted by JCI/Tyco suggest the potential for ongoing human health risks outside the Expanded Site Investigation Area.

**9. Will the DNR be sampling any wells that were previously sampled by JCI/Tyco?**

No.

**10. How do I get my drinking water well tested?**

Eligible well owners will receive packets of information including a potable well survey and an access agreement for sampling. Letters should arrive in the mail by approximately **October 2, 2020**. If you believe your property is part of the *Expanded Site Investigation Area* and you did not receive a packet of information, contact DNR at the following email address: [DNRJCI PFAS@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRJCI PFAS@wisconsin.gov) or call **1-888-626-3244** and leave a message.

**11. Am I required to have my well sampled?**

Participation in sampling is voluntary. DNR will only sample wells where landowners return both a *Potable Well Survey* and a signed *Access Permission Agreement* giving their consent to sample. The DNR strongly encourages residents to have their potable well sampled at this time as additional opportunities for sampling by the DNR are unlikely. Having your well tested will inform you of potential PFAS exposure risk at your property.

If you opt out of sampling, the DNR requests that you to complete the *Potable Well Survey* indicating you would not like your potable well sampled. The survey should be returned in the stamped and self-addressed envelope provided as soon as possible with a postmark no later than **October 21, 2020**. Alternatively, you can email a copy of the completed *Potable Well Survey*, to the DNR at the following email address: [DNRJCI PFAS@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRJCI PFAS@wisconsin.gov).

**12. Do I have to pay for DNR sampling my well?**

No. Within the *Expanded Site Investigation Area*, the sampling and associated laboratory analysis will be completed by the DNR at no cost to you as the well owner.

**13. If I opt out of sampling, will I have an opportunity to change my mind and opt in later?**

Once the sampling has been completed in 2020, it is unlikely that the DNR will have additional resources to conduct potable well sampling again. The DNR strongly encourages well owners to have their potable well sampled at this time.



**14. If I previously had my well sampled myself, will you confirm my sample results by testing my well?**

If you have sampled your well on your own, please forward your results to the DNR. A DNR representative will contact you regarding eligibility for confirmation sampling. Sample results can be emailed to [DNRJCIPFAS@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRJCIPFAS@wisconsin.gov). You can also call the DNR regarding sample results at **1-888-626-3244**.

**15. Who will conduct the sampling of my well?**

The DNR has retained the services of a qualified contractor, Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions (Wood) to conduct the sampling activities. Wood has supported the DNR on several projects involving PFAS since 2019 and has a regional office in Madison, WI. Wood has been supporting PFAS related projects nationally since 2006, including the Conceptual Drinking Water Supply Plan for 14 communities in the East Metro area of the neighboring state of Minnesota.

**16. How long before sampling begins?**

Sampling activities will begin in October 2020 pending receipt of *Potable Well Surveys* and *Access Permission Agreements* from well owners. Sampling will continue for approximately 4 to 8 weeks. Once you have returned your *Potable Well Survey* and *Access Permission Agreement* DNR's contractor, Wood, will contact you to schedule a date and time for sampling your well.

**17. In what order will you sample properties? Will the sampling be staged/phased?**

The DNR's contractor, Wood, will have sampling crews staged in all areas of the *Expanded Site Investigation Area* simultaneously. Sampling will be conducted only at properties where well owners have returned both the *Potable Well Survey* and *Access Permission Agreement* to the DNR.

**18. Will the DNR or DNR's contractor need to enter my home during sampling?**

Upon receipt of a signed *Access Permission Agreement*, the DNR's contractor, Wood, will contact you to discuss your well(s), components of your individual water system (i.e., water treatment systems, softeners, etc.), determine the most appropriate sampling location(s) and to determine the schedule for sampling your well.

In most cases, Wood will be collecting samples from outdoor spigots that provide untreated water and therefore will not be required to enter your home.

If you are unsure about your water system, Wood representatives may need to enter the basement/utility room to evaluate the system and select the most appropriate sampling location. Any need to enter a property would be discussed during the initial coordination call and approved prior to on-site arrival.

**19. How long will sampling take?**

The DNR's contractor, Wood, will discuss sampling protocols with you prior to sampling your well. In most circumstances, Wood will be able to collect a sample from an outdoor location at your property and sampling personnel will be on your property for less than an hour.

**20. How long before results are available?**

All well owners can expect to receive results from DNR/Wood via US Postal Service within 30-days of the sampling event.



## **21. At what levels are PFAS considered unsafe?**

In 2016, the United States Environmental Protection Agency established cumulative-lifetime health advisories for two widely produced and studied PFAS (perfluorooctane sulfonate [PFOS] and perfluorooctanoic acid [PFOA]), at 70 parts per trillion (ppt). At the request of the DNR and in accordance with the state's groundwater law, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) reviewed scientific literature and recommended groundwater enforcement standards of 20 ppt for PFOA and PFOS individually or combined.

Currently, the state of Wisconsin does not have any health standards or recommended health standards for 34 of the 36 PFAS compounds that will be tested for in your water. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is currently reviewing scientific literature and is developing recommendations for these compounds. Recommendations for the 34 other PFAS compounds are expected to be completed by DHS in fall of 2020, if such scientific data exists for a specific PFAS compound.

For more information regarding the ch. NR 140, Wis. Adm. Code, rule process that is addressing Wisconsin's standards for PFAS, please review the following DNR webpage:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Groundwater/NR140.html>

## **22. What are the health effects of PFAS?**

Although PFAS have been used extensively since the 1950s, experts are only beginning to understand their potential impacts on human health. This understanding continues to evolve based on ongoing research. For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services \(DHS\) PFAS webpage](#).

## **23. Will the DNR provide me with an alternative water source if PFAS is detected in my well?**

Well owners with PFOA and PFOS at or above 20 parts per trillion (ppt) individually or combined in their drinking water may be eligible for a temporary drinking water supply provided by the DNR. The DNR will continue to work to identify and work with any responsible parties to provide replacement water solutions to residents with impacted wells, as required by Wisconsin law. Where state funds are spent, the DNR will take actions to recover those funds from those responsible for the PFAS contamination.

## **24. What happens if my drinking water has levels of PFAS above the levels recommended by the Department of Health Services?**

The DNR will notify well owners within 24 hours of receipt of analytical results that are above the DHS recommended groundwater quality standard of 20 ppt (parts per trillion) for PFOA and PFOS (individually or combined). If your well has PFOA or PFOS at or above these levels, the DNR will contact you regarding a temporary supply of drinking water to be provided by the DNR to you at no cost, within the guidelines of state law.

## **25. Where can you get more information about the PFAS investigation associated with PFAS in the Marinette and Peshtigo area?**

For more information about PFAS and PFAS in the Marinette and Peshtigo area, including additional FAQ, please refer to the following websites:

- <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Contaminants/Marinette.html>
- <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/PFAS>