

PFAS in Wisconsin: The Tip of the Iceberg



Industrial sites like the Tyco/Johnson Controls facilities in Marinette, Wisconsin are sources of PFAS groundwater contamination that has spread from these sites, threatening nearby fisheries and affecting residential wells. So far, at least 36 families have been exposed to PFAS in their drinking water. The highest concentration detected in a private well was 1900 ng/L, far above the EPA’s Health Advisory Level of 70 ng/L (parts per trillion).

The potential for other similar sites in Wisconsin is unknown as there has been no statewide inventory of likely sources of PFAS contamination such as paper mills, fire training areas, airports, manufacturing facilities and landfills.

Of the more than 11,000 public drinking water systems tested in Wisconsin, only 90 have been tested for PFAS. The one-time testing in

2013-2015 detected PFAS in La Crosse and Rhinelander public water system and low levels in the West Bend system. Moreover, these wells were tested for only 6 PFAS analytes in a class of thousands of chemicals.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of more than 5,000 man-made toxic chemicals used to make consumer products resistant to water, grease or stains. Research has shown probable links between PFAS exposure and cancer, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, and pregnancy-induced hypertension.

Aqueous film-forming foams (AFFF) containing PFAS has been used by the Department of Defense for over 40 years for suppressing liquid fuel fires, fire-training exercises and other emergency fire response activities. As a result of these activities, groundwater, surface water, and plants and animals in the vicinity of military installations have become contaminated with PFAS, some much more than others.

What we know about PFAS in Wisconsin today is just the tip of the iceberg.

Military Sites in Wisconsin

In July 2018, the **Department of Defense** identified eight (8) sites with known or suspected release of two PFAS compounds - PFOA and PFOS.

- Badger Army Ammunition Plant
- Fort McCoy, U.S. Army base
- General Mitchell Air Reserve Station
- General Mitchell State Air National Guard Base
- Madison Air Support Facility, Army National Guard
- Truax Field State Air National Guard Base
- Volk Field State Air National Guard Base
- West Bend Air Support Facility, Army National Guard

PFOA & PFOS Groundwater Detections in Wisconsin (Partial List) EPA Health Advisory Level for Drinking Water = 70 ng/L		
Site Name	Location	PFOS + PFOA Max Conc.
Ansul Fire Technology Center	Marinette, WI	202,000 ng/L
Badger Army Ammunition Plant	Baraboo, WI	<i>not tested</i>
Fort McCoy Fire Training Burn Pit #1	Sparta, WI	31,900 ng/L
Fort McCoy Fire Training Burn Pit #2	Sparta, WI	72,400 ng/L
Fort McCoy Fire Training Burn Pit #3	Sparta, WI	121,000 ng/L
General Mitchell – 440 th	Milwaukee, WI	10,800 ng/L
Volk Field Air National Guard	Camp Douglas, WI	23,000 ng/L
WI Air National Guard Truax Field	Madison, WI	39,841 ng/L



PFAS Community Partners

The PFAS Community Campaign seeks to protect human health and the environment by calling for the immediate transition to safer non-fluorinated alternatives.

Where PFAS contamination is found or suspected to exist, testing and cleanup methods and remedies implemented should be fully protective of human and ecological health, prevent toxic emissions, be readily and properly monitored, and provide permanent solutions.

Cleanup methods and remedies should not create more toxic by-products. All PFAS wastes should have an authorized treatment plan acceptable to communities, tribes and indigenous peoples – including those both directly and indirectly impacted.

We seek to advance the principles of environmental justice by assuring that all people enjoy the same degree of protection and access to decision-making processes. We pursue these goals through peaceful non-violent action and democratic organizing consistent with the Jemez Principles.

Organizations supporting these goals are:

- ❖ Annie Appleseed Project
 - ❖ Casa Maria Catholic Worker – Milwaukee
 - ❖ Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
 - ❖ Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin
 - ❖ Community members affected by contamination from Tyco/Johnson Controls
 - ❖ Crawford Stewardship Project
 - ❖ Family Farm Defenders
 - ❖ Fire Fighter Cancer Foundation
 - ❖ Green Wisdom School of Natural and Botanical Medicine – Women’s Environmental Institute
 - ❖ Headwater, LLC
 - ❖ Madison Audubon Society
 - ❖ Midwest Environmental Advocates
 - ❖ Midwest Environmental Justice Organization
 - ❖ Mt. Sally Sanctuary, Inc.
 - ❖ Nukewatch
 - ❖ People Empowered (PEPL) Protect the Land of Rosendale
 - ❖ Physicians for Social Responsibility Wisconsin
 - ❖ Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network
 - ❖ Toxics Action Center
 - ❖ Wisconsin Environmental Health Network
 - ❖ Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters
 - ❖ Wisconsin Network for Peace, Justice, & Sustainability
 - ❖ Wisconsin Resources Protection Council
- ✓ To add your organization, visit www.CSWAB.org, click on PFAS and then PFAS Community Partners.

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The major types of human exposure sources for PFAS include contaminated drinking water and ingesting food contaminated with PFAS, including fish and shellfish. PFAS research also shows that the developing fetus can be exposed to PFAS when umbilical cord blood from their mothers crosses the placenta during pregnancy.

Newborns can be exposed to PFAS through breast milk. Older children may be exposed to PFAS through food and water, similar to adults. In addition, toddlers and young children have a higher risk of exposure to PFAS from stain-resistant carpeting and similar products, largely due to time spent lying and crawling on floors in their early years.

For these reasons, we are calling on Congress for a total ban on the production and use of PFAS by 2020 to assure the transition to safer non-fluorinated alternatives and to stop further assaults on our human environment.

The PFAS Community Campaign
is a project of
**Citizens for Safe Water
Around Badger**

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