



## Harris County Water Works Public Notice

### Regarding PFAS Compounds

Safe drinking water is very important to any community and Harris County Water Works is committed to keeping the county's water supply safe for all. Harris County Water Works continually monitors and tests the county's water supply to ensure its safety and to meet all federal and state regulatory requirements.

#### Additional Water Monitoring and Testing Required

During 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated additional monitoring and testing of all public water systems serving populations of 3,300 or more regarding currently unregulated Perfluoroalkyl (PFAS) compounds. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is ensuring that all Georgia public water systems understand and comply with EPA's additional water testing mandates regarding PFAS.

#### What are PFAS?

PFAS compounds are commonly referred to as "forever chemicals" and are comprised of man-made synthetic chemicals that have been in use since the 1940s. These chemicals were popular due to their oil-repellant traits, but it also means the chemicals remain in the environment due to their inability to breakdown or deteriorate over time, hence the name "forever chemicals." PFAS compounds are commonly found in the environment and sometimes even in people's blood. The amount detected varies all over the United States.

PFAS chemicals have been released into the air, soil, and water from manufacturing and processing facilities, production of products, military installations, and many other sources. PFAS chemicals were also incorporated into home products such as non-stick cookware, fabric protectors, waxes, and paints. There are now rules and regulations in place that eliminated the use of PFAS chemicals from U.S. manufacturing processes, but these chemicals remain in our environment and make their way into U.S. waterways and ultimately through water filter plants.

#### How is PFAS Measured?

PFAS compounds are measured in parts per trillion. 1 part per trillion (ppt) is equivalent to one drop of water in a pool the size of a football field that's 43 feet deep, or 1 drop in 1 trillion gallons.

#### Harris County Additional Water Testing Results

Based on the EPA mandate and EPD follow-up, Harris County Water Works tested for PFAS compounds during mid 2023. During that testing event, PFAS compounds were detected in the county's water system. Those testing results are as follows:

PFAS Compound	EPA Advisory Levels (ppt)	Amount Detected at Harris County Locations (ppt)	Locations
PFOA	4.0	4.6	Harris County Water Filter Plant
PFOS	4.0	7.1	Harris County Water Filter Plant
PFOS	2.0	5.3	Purchased Water from Columbus Water

Based on the above testing results, Harris County Water Works is notifying the public that PFAS compounds have been detected in the county's water system. This notification is exclusive to Harris County

water system customers and does **not** include water customers of the cities of Hamilton, Pine Mountain, Waverly Hall, and Shiloh or Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain Valley Water Association, or any other water systems located within the County.

### **What is Harris County Water Works doing about PFAS?**

Harris County Water Works has been proactive in identifying PFAS compounds in the county's water supply system and determining the best methods to treat these compounds.

Beginning November 2023, Harris County Water Works will implement a six month water monitoring plan consisting of monthly water testing at the three locations listed above to determine if the water test results are consistently above EPA's advisory levels. If the results consistently exceed EPA advisory levels, the County will work with their water engineering consultant to prepare a long-term plan to control the levels of PFAS in the county's water system. Harris County Water Works will also continue to work with Columbus Water Works, a county water purchase partner.

### **Do you still have questions?**

- The Georgia EPD has created an informational website explaining PFAS at this link: [GA EPD PFAS Information](#).
- The U.S. EPA PFAS information can be found at this link: [US EPA PFAS Information](#)
- The Columbus Water Works PFAS information can be found at this link: [CWW Health Advisory](#)
- For more local information about the Harris County Water Works PFAS program, contact Jeff Culpepper, Harris County Water Works Director, at 706-324-1175.