

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

## The Abington Rockland Joint Water Works has levels of PFAS6 above the Drinking Water Standard

*This report contains important information about your drinking water. Please translate it or speak with someone who understands it or ask the contact listed below for a translation.*

### What happened?

The Abington Rockland Joint Water Works (ARJWW) recently violated a newly promulgated drinking water standard for the sum of six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances called PFAS6 and is taking the following corrective actions: We have contracted with an engineering firm to investigate, design, and install treatment to remove PFAS. In the interim, a self-service bottle filling station was installed at 366 Centre Street to provide residents with drinking water with PFAS6 levels below the drinking water standard. See information about filling station in the “What is being done?” section below.

### What does this mean?

**This is not an emergency. If it had been, you would have been notified within 24 hours.** Although this is not an emergency, as our customer, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation.

On October 2, 2020, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) promulgated a new drinking water regulation and Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 20 nanograms per liter (ng/L or parts per trillion - ppt) for PFAS6. See our latest results in the table below.

| PFAS6 Results for Hingham Street Water Treatment Plant in Rockland |                   |                        |                     |                          |                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Quarterly Compliance Period                                        | Monitoring Period | Sample Collection Date | PFAS6 Result (ng/L) | Quarterly Average (ng/L) | PFAS6 MCL (ng/L) |
| Quarter 1, 2024                                                    | Month 1           | 1/30/24                | 25.5                | 24                       | 20               |
|                                                                    | Month 2           | 2/28/24                | 24.5                |                          |                  |
|                                                                    | Month 3           | 3/29/24                | 22.0                |                          |                  |

Our results from the Hingham Street Water Treatment Plant are above the MCL for PFAS6 for Quarter 1, of 2024. Even though we have been notifying you of our results since we began collecting samples, to comply with the new drinking water regulation we must provide you with this public notice. The water from Hingham Street WTP is one of three entrance points that supplies drinking water to our distribution system. The quarter 1 results from Great Sandy Bottom were 3.18 ng/L and Myers Ave. is temporarily offline.

**Some people who drink water containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in excess of the maximum contaminant level (MCL) may experience certain adverse effects. These could include effects on the liver, blood, immune system, thyroid, and fetal development. These PFAS may also elevate the risk of certain cancers.** For more information on PFAS6 see the weblinks listed below.

### What is PFAS6?

PFAS6 includes perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA) and perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA). PFAS are man-made chemicals that have been used in the manufacturing of certain fire-fighting foams, moisture and stain resistant products, and other industrial processes. For more information see the weblinks listed below.

### What should I do?

- **Consumers in a sensitive subgroup (pregnant or nursing women, infants and people diagnosed by their health care provider to have a compromised immune system), are advised not to consume, drink, or cook with water when the level of PFAS6 is above 20 ng/L.**
- **Consumers in sensitive subgroups** are advised to use bottled water or water from the bottle filling station for drinking and cooking foods that absorb water (like pasta).
- **For infant formula,** use bottled water/water from the bottle filling station or use formula that does not require adding water.

- **For older children and adults not in a sensitive subgroup**, the 20 ng/L value is applicable to a lifetime of consuming the water. For these groups, shorter duration exposures present less risk. However, if you are concerned about your exposure while steps are being taken to assess and lower the PFAS concentration in the drinking water, use of bottled water will reduce your exposure.
- **Bottled water should only be used if it has been tested.** The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires companies licensed to sell or distribute bottled water or carbonated non-alcoholic beverages to test for PFAS. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/water-quality-standards-for-bottled-water-in-massachusetts#list-of-bottlers->
- **Home water treatment systems** that are certified to remove PFAS by an independent testing group such as NSF, UL, or Water Quality Association may be used to treat the water. These may include point of entry systems, which treat all the water entering a home, or point of use devices, which treat water where it is used, such as at a faucet. For information on selecting home treatment devices that are effective in treating the water for PFAS6, review the MassDEP factsheet for consumers referenced below.
- **In most situations the water can be safely used for washing foods, brushing teeth, bathing, and showering.**
- **Boiling the water will not destroy PFAS6** and will somewhat increase its level due to evaporation of some of the water.
- **If you have specific health concerns regarding exposure, you should see the Centers for Disease Control's link below and consult a health professional, such as your doctor.**

For more information see the weblinks listed below.

## ***What is being done?***

The Abington Rockland Joint Water works is taking the following proactive measures:

- ARJWW has installed a self-service water filling station to provide water with levels of PFAS6 below 20 ng/L to those ARJWW customers in sensitive subgroups. The fill station spigot is located at the Abington/Rockland Joint Water Works Main Office, 366 Centre Ave, Rockland, MA 02370. The spigot is open Monday – Friday from 8:00am – 3:00pm. Any questions call (781) 878-0901.
- We have retrofitted the existing treatment vessel with Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) at the Myers Ave treatment plant to remove PFAS6.
- ARJWW received a \$26 million, interest free loan through the state's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program. The funds are for PFAS Treatment Improvements which include construction of a permanent solution to remove PFAS to meet the MassDEP new regulations. The project has started and is progressing.
- We will continue to sample and provide updates as required.

## ***Where can I get more information?***

If you have questions about your water system's operation or response to this issue, please contact the system operator directly. If you have questions about the drinking water regulations or health risks posed by this contaminant you can contact the MassDEP Drinking Water Program at: [program.director-dwp@mass.gov](mailto:program.director-dwp@mass.gov) or (617) 292-5770. If you have questions about specific symptoms, you can contact your doctor or other health care provider. If you have general questions about public health, you can contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 1-617-624-5757.

For more information, please contact Tom Royal at (781) 878-0901 or [troyal@abrockwater.com](mailto:troyal@abrockwater.com) or 366 Centre Street, Rockland, MA 02370

See factsheet and weblinks listed below.

- [MassDEP Fact Sheet - Questions and Answers for Consumers \(https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351\)](https://www.mass.gov/media/1854351)
- [CDC ATSDR Information on PFAS for consumers and health professionals \(https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html\)](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html)
- [Massachusetts Department of Public Health information about PFAS in Drinking Water - https://www.mass.gov/service-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-drinking-water](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-drinking-water)

This Public Notice is being sent by: Abington Rockland Joint Water Works - PWS# 4001000 - Date distributed: 05/10/24

We will provide public notice updates every three months until the situation has been resolved.

*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.*