

Information for PFAS self-testers

Effective May 23, 2022

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is required by state law to develop and implement a program to evaluate soil and groundwater for PFAS at locations licensed to apply sludge or septage prior to 2019. This guidance was developed with consideration of the funding provided by the 130th legislature for the purposes of implementing this program and providing treatment for private groundwater wells where levels of PFAS are found, as a result of the investigation, to exceed Maine's interim drinking water standard¹.

The Department's investigation does not include every household in Maine. Maine's investigation is limited to locations associated with a source or suspected source of PFAS, as determined by the DEP. A source is defined as a location with a high assurance of PFAS impacts, such as licensed sludge and septage land application site, or a remediation-type site, and specifically excludes contamination that might be caused by a homeowner's private septic system, or other household activities.

While Maine DEP will not provide reimbursement of costs associated with homeowner sampling, bottled water, or the installation of filtration systems for every self-testing household in Maine that exceeds Maine's interim drinking water standard, some circumstances will warrant additional assistance from DEP. If you have self-tested your well and your location is not associated with a source or suspected source, as determined by the DEP, but would like to know if you are eligible for reimbursement or additional assistance, please review the table below.

Maine residents not eligible for reimbursement or additional assistance should keep in mind that the funding provided to the Maine DEP is limited and its use must be prioritized to complete the investigation required per [Public Law 2021, Chapter 478, An Act To Investigate Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater](#). This investigation is still in its early stages where DEP has only begun evaluating and sampling land application sites, and it is expected to continue through 2025. In addition to the investigation, funds used for bottled water and the installation and maintenance of treatment systems will be prioritized for those groundwater wells with the highest levels of PFAS that pose the highest risk to human health. For this reason, not every self-tester with results exceeding Maine's interim drinking water standard will qualify for reimbursement of costs associated with sampling, bottled water, or installation of a filtration system. As the investigation unfolds, DEP will revisit its expenditure rate to determine if this approach needs to be modified.

¹ Maine's interim drinking water standard was set by the 130th legislature at 20 parts per trillion (ppt) for the sum of the following six PFAS compounds: Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), Perfluorooctanesulfonate (PFOS), Perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS), Perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA), and Perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA). This standard may change as the Maine Drinking Water Program will promulgate permanent drinking water rules or Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) by December 31, 2024. Promulgation of PFAS MCLs may result in revisions to this guidance.

Procedure for PFAS self-testers where location is not tied to a known or suspected source *
Effective May 23, 2022
(subject to change with revisions)

Self-Test Result	Resample	Step Out Investigation	Bottled Water	Filter System	Maintain Filter System	Reimbursement
< 20 ppt	No	No	No	No	N/A	No
20 – 90** ppt	No	No	No	No	N/A	No
90** - 1,000 ppt	As Warranted***	As Warranted***	If Source Determined***	If Source Determined***	If Source Determined***	If Step Out***
> 1,000 ppt	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

* A source is defined as a location of historic or ongoing contamination caused by PFAS such as from the licensed land application of sludge and septage or a remediation-type site, and specifically excludes contamination that might be caused by a homeowner’s private septic system.

** Massachusetts has the same drinking water standard as Maine at 20 ppt for the sum of 6 PFAS. Massachusetts also identifies 90 ppt as an Imminent Hazard Level (IHL). This IHL is a concentration at which Massachusetts will use State funds and resources to mitigate impacts to a water supply. This number is derived from using a reference dose for the sum of six PFAS derived from the Massachusetts Office of Resource Standards as well as a Hazard Index of 1 (which is required per the Massachusetts Contingency Plan). Because Massachusetts’ Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) is the same as Maine’s interim drinking water standard and Massachusetts has already completed the research to determine an IHL, Maine DEP proposes to adopt this level for purposes of internal guidance on managing self-testing results until such time that Maine develops a similar action level or threshold.

*** In some cases, and depending on a case-by-case determination from staff scientists, the Maine DEP will determine that a step out investigation is warranted. In these cases, reimbursement will be available for initial testing costs for PFAS based on specific criteria and as outlined in [Maine DEP’s PFAS Sampling for Homeowners](#). If Maine DEP determines after a step out investigation that there is a source of PFAS, the Maine DEP will cover costs of bottled water, filter system installations, maintenance, and any ongoing sampling as long as funding is available.

Maine DEP assumes that levels greater than 1,000 ppt are the result of a source of PFAS and further investigation will be warranted. Costs will be absorbed by Maine DEP as long as funding allows unless an alternative Responsible Party is identified.