

# PFAS Exposure Assessment Westfield, Hampden County, MA

INFORMATION TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) will conduct exposure assessments in communities near current or former military bases and that are known to have had per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in their drinking water. Hampden County – specifically the City of Westfield – is one of these communities. The primary goal of the exposure assessment is to provide information to community members served by the City of Westfield public drinking water supply system about levels of PFAS in their bodies. This information may also be used to help inform future studies evaluating the impact of PFAS exposure on human health.

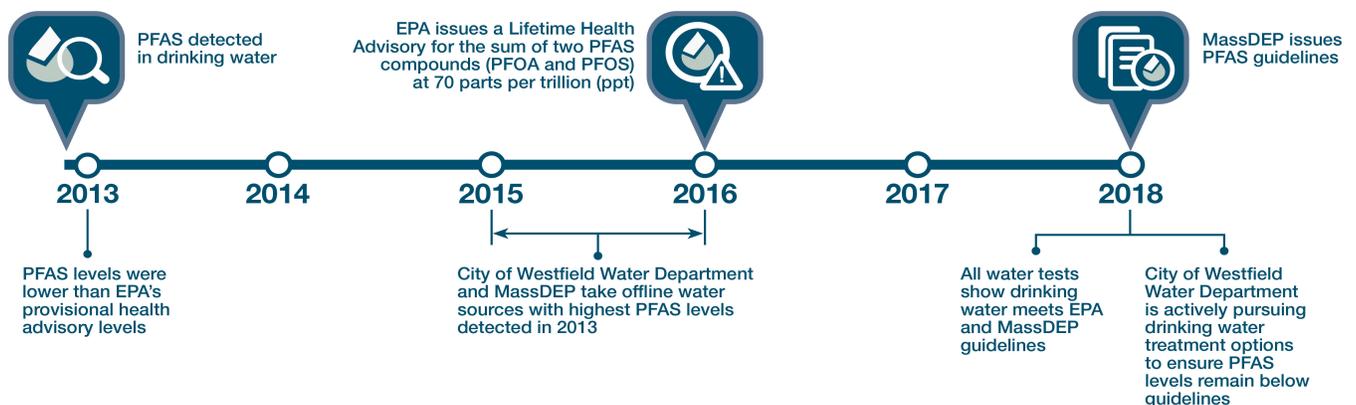
The exposure assessments will provide information to communities about the levels of PFAS in their bodies.

## Background on PFAS in Hampden County

As early as the 1980s, the Barnes Air National Guard Base (the Base) used aqueous film forming foam containing PFAS for its firefighting training. These compounds later moved off-site in groundwater, likely affecting both municipal and private drinking water wells located downgradient of the Base.

In 2013, when PFAS was first detected, the Westfield Water Department and the Massachusetts Department Environmental Protection (MassDEP) took actions to ensure the quality of the drinking water in Westfield. These actions over the next several years included removing three drinking water supply wells from service and placing temporary water restrictions on all non-essential water use.

Presently, the Westfield Department of Public Works (DPW) - Water Division's primary sources of drinking water are from surface water and groundwater sources meeting federal and state PFAS guidelines. The Westfield DPW-Water Division installed a temporary treatment system. This system ensures that PFAS levels in the treated water are below detection limits. The Westfield DPW-Water Division is in the process of installing permanent treatment on its four affected wells. The Westfield DPW-Water Division continues to test its water sources and pursue system improvements to address PFAS contamination. Nearby private wells were sampled and, if needed, filtration systems were installed.



National Center  
for Environmental Health  
Agency for Toxic Substances  
and Disease Registry

## Schedule for Exposure Assessment

CDC and ATSDR will begin an exposure assessment in Westfield in summer 2019. Recruitment of participants will take approximately six weeks. After that, ATSDR will be in Westfield for two weeks to test participants. Individual results will be mailed to participants. This could take several months. CDC laboratories will perform the exposure assessment analysis according to very specific guidelines established by CDC/ATSDR.

## Recruitment

Participating in an exposure assessment will help you and your community better understand the extent of environmental exposures to PFAS. A random selection of households impacted by PFAS in their drinking water will be identified. Though not everyone exposed to PFAS through drinking water in the community will have the opportunity to participate, by including a random selection of households the results will help estimate exposure for all community members who meet eligibility criteria, even those that were not tested.

If your household is selected to participate, you will receive a letter in the mail from CDC/ATSDR explaining the exposure assessment and registration process. You will also get a phone call from a representative who can answer questions and register you and other members of your household interested in participating. Household members are eligible if they are 3 years of age or older, do not have a bleeding disorder and are not anemic, and have lived in the recruitment area since January 20, 2015.

## PFAS Biomonitoring

Blood tests for PFAS are most useful when they are part of a scientific investigation or a health study. You can find more general information about PFAS blood testing on ATSDR's website. [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/pfas-blood-testing.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/pfas-blood-testing.html)



Analyzing blood samples for PFAS takes considerably longer than routine blood testing you may get through a doctor's office.



## Health Advisories for Levels of PFAS in Drinking Water

In 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Health Advisory for two PFAS compounds – perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) – individually or combined, of 70 parts per trillion (ppt).

In 2018, MassDEP, citing additional research, established a more conservative (health-protective) guideline. MassDEP included three additional PFAS compounds (perfluorononanoic acid, perfluorohexanesulfonic acid, and perfluoroheptanoic acid). The MassDEP drinking water guideline is 70 ppt and applies to the sum of these five PFAS.

## For More Information

### CDC/ATSDR PFAS Exposure Assessments:

For information on work being done in Westfield, a newsletter, and detailed information on the exposure assessments, visit: [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas) or contact Captain Tarah Somers RN, MSN/MPH, Regional Representative, 617-918-1493, [tv4@cdc.gov](mailto:tv4@cdc.gov).

**Westfield Public Health:** For information about public health and environmental protection in Westfield, visit: [www.cityofwestfield.org/166/Health](http://www.cityofwestfield.org/166/Health) or contact Joseph Rouse, Director of Public Health, 413-572-6210, [j.rouse@cityofwestfield.org](mailto:j.rouse@cityofwestfield.org).

**Westfield Water:** For information about Westfield water, Westfield's response to meet or exceed all federal and state standards, and current work on PFAS, visit: [www.cityofwestfield.org/657/Water](http://www.cityofwestfield.org/657/Water). Or contact Heather Stayton, P.E. Systems Engineer, 413-572-6226, [h.stayton@cityofwestfield.org](mailto:h.stayton@cityofwestfield.org).