



Perfluorooctanesulfonic Acid (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA)

Classified as Emerging Contaminants

What are PFOS and PFOA?

PFOS (perfluorooctanesulfonic acid) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) are part of a man-made class of chemicals called perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) used in many industrial and consumer products such as:



AFFF



Carpets



Fabrics



Paints and Stains



Nonstick cookware



Food packaging

In 1970, the Air Force began using aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), which contains PFOS and PFOA. AFFF is the most efficient extinguishing method for petroleum-based fires and is widely used across the firefighting industry to protect people and property.

Emerging Contaminants and Regulatory Action

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified PFOS and PFOA as emerging contaminants.

Emerging Contaminants:

- (a) have pathways to enter the environment
- (b) present potential unacceptable human health or environmental risks
- (c) either do not have promulgated standards based on peer-reviewed science, or the promulgated regulatory standards are evolving due to new science, detection capabilities, or pathways.

On May 19, 2016, the EPA established a Lifetime Health Advisory of 70 parts per trillion for PFOS and PFOA in drinking water.