

EPA Proposes New PFAS Water Testing Regulations

Find out how the EPA plans to regulate PFAS contamination in drinking water, and bring water utility systems into compliance.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, April 17, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The EPA Proposes Its First-Ever Limits On PFAS “Forever Chemical” Contamination In Drinking Water

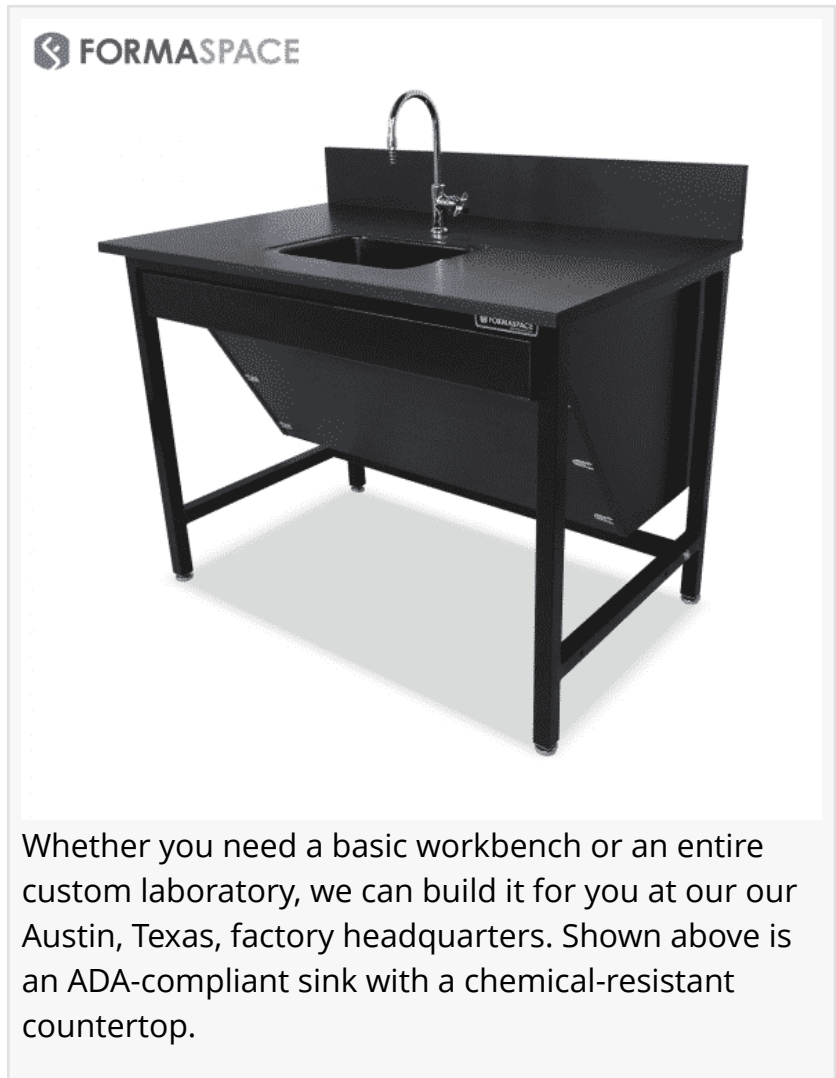
Under its authority granted by the 1972 EPA Clean Water Drinking Act (CWA) and the 1974 Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the EPA recently proposed adding PFAS “forever chemicals” to the list of dangerous chemicals listed in the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWRs) that govern contamination levels in water supplied by the nation’s nearly 150,000 public drinking water utilities.

Why Is The EPA Taking Action On PFAS Forever Chemicals Now?

There are a couple of reasons.

The first one is that we now have a greater understanding of the health risks associated with PFAS chemicals, which is reflected in recent [health advisories](#) issued by the EPA.

Back in 2016, the EPA issued a health advisory suggesting that PFAS concentrations in drinking water should be limited to 70 ppt (parts per trillion).



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However, in June 2022, the EPA issued a much stricter health advisory guidance for PFAS chemicals, based on a cumulative “lifetime” exposure model that not only takes into account PFAS chemical absorption from drinking water but contamination from other sources as well, including the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the consumer products we use (from non-stick cookware to water-proof clothing, and flame retardant furniture.)

The EPA also issued a health advisory limiting exposure to the chemical industry’s supposedly safer next-generation PFAS substitutes – e.g. perfluorobutane sulfonic acid and its potassium salt (PFBS) and hexafluoropropylene oxide (HFPO) dimer acid and its ammonium salt – collectively marketed under the brand name GenX.

The second reason the EPA is taking action now is that it’s legally required to update its regulations every six years per a set of amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act that Congress passed in 1996.

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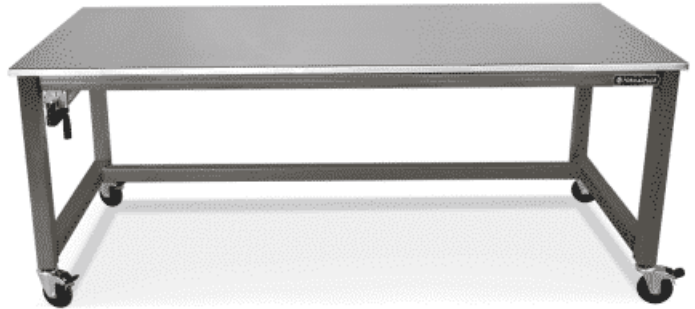
And, unlike EPA health advisories, these regulations (if approved) have “teeth,” meaning they can be enforced across the nearly 150,000 public drinking water utilities over which the EPA has jurisdiction.

What Are The New Limits On PFAS Contamination In Drinking Water That The EPA Is Proposing?

In the leadup to the EPA’s seventh 6-year review cycle, newly appointed EPA Commissioner Michael Regan announced plans to create a “PFAS Strategic Roadmap”

that would assess the “life cycle” impact of PFAS chemicals, including how PFAS chemicals enter the environment, how to monitor and limit PFAS chemical exposures, and how to remediate

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PFAS contamination in the environment.

The PFAS strategic roadmap was issued in October 2021.

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(*The sixteen inorganic chemicals already subject to EPA regulation in drinking water are antimony, arsenic, asbestos, barium, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, copper, cyanide, fluoride, lead, mercury, nitrate, nitrite, selenium, and thallium.)

The new proposed drinking water regulations would set limits for two PFAS chemicals (PFOA and PFNA) at 4 parts per trillion (ppt). Four other PFAS chemicals (PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and GenX) would be regulated through a matrix standard that limits their total cumulative exposure in drinking water.)

Environmentalists welcome the new EPA proposals but point out they are not breaking new ground. Limits on PFAS chemical contamination in drinking water are already in place in ten states, including Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

The Timeframe – From Proposal To Implementation – For The New EPA Drinking Water Regulations

Now that the new proposed EPA drinking water regulations have been published, the EPA is soliciting written comments from the public. The EPA will also conduct a public hearing on May 4, 2023, to hear verbal comments.

The comment period is scheduled to close on May 30, 2023; after that, the EPA is expected to review and consider all the input gathered from the public before issuing its final regulatory rules. This is expected to happen sometime toward the end of 2023.

Once the rules are finalized and published, public water systems regulated by the EPA will typically have three years to come into compliance with the new rules.

Creating The Infrastructure To Monitor And Limit PFAS Chemicals In Drinking Water Will Be A Major Financial And Logistical Challenge For Public Water Utilities

Public water utilities have expressed concern over the accelerated timeframe and cost and complexity of complying with the new proposed regulations.

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