

Washington adopts new PFAS protections to safeguard public health and prevent pollution

New regulation phases out PFAS in a broad range of consumer goods such as clothing and cleaning products

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Department of Ecology (Ecology) yesterday [adopted new restrictions](#) on intentionally added per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in consumer products, expanding on existing PFAS restrictions. [The rule](#) will protect health by preventing unnecessary exposure to the “forever chemicals” linked to cancer, immune harm, and developmental impacts. It will also prevent PFAS contamination and high costs to clean up the chemicals that threaten drinking water systems, wastewater treatment plants, and communities living near contaminated sites.

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costs from PFAS contamination skyrocket, prevention is the most rational solution,” said Cheri Peele, director of government and market policy at Toxic-Free Future. “We urge the Washington State Department of Ecology to take even stronger action in the coming years to phase out PFAS in all products,” she added.

The new rule:

- Prohibits manufacturing, selling, or distributing priority consumer products that contain intentionally added PFAS starting January 1, 2027, including cleaning products, apparel and accessories, and automotive washes.

- Requires reporting of intentional use of PFAS in the following consumer products effective January 1, 2026: apparel intended for extreme and extended use; footwear; gear for recreation and travel; automotive waxes; cookware and kitchen supplies; firefighting personal protective equipment; floor waxes and polishes; hard surface sealers; and ski waxes.

PFAS are extremely expensive and difficult to clean up once released into the environment. They are also in the blood of nearly every American. According to a recent fact sheet prepared by

Ecology, manufacturers spend only about \$50 to \$1,000 per pound to add PFAS to products. PFAS do not stay in those products but enter the environment, leaving taxpayers to pay millions—even billions—to clean it up:

- The state has spent more than \$30 million to monitor, research, and clean up PFAS since 2019.
- It could cost up to \$18 million to remove one pound of PFAS from wastewater.
- It will cost nearly \$1 billion to clean up Washington's contaminated drinking water.

For each product category, Ecology had the option to restrict PFAS, require reporting, or take no action based on the availability of safer solutions. "We are now looking at a delayed timeline for many products—like cookware—where PFAS should be banned because safer solutions are on the market," added Peele. "Six states have already banned PFAS in cookware, so it's concerning for Washington to only require reporting. Without additional restrictions, taxpayers will continue to face higher and higher costs from cleaning up the mess."

The products requiring reporting have also been targeted for continued evaluation of safer alternatives in Cycle 2 of the Safer Products for Washington program. If safer alternatives are identified, restrictions could be finalized in 2028.

ABOUT SAFER PRODUCTS FOR WASHINGTON

The Safer Products for Washington Act is the nation's strongest law regulating toxic chemicals in products—a major source of contamination in our homes, food, waterways, and bodies. Passed in 2019, this precedent-setting law helps protect people and the environment from toxic chemical exposure and pollution.

The law directs state agencies to identify products that are significant sources of high-priority chemicals and gives Washington's Department of Ecology the authority to take action to reduce the chemicals. Ecology can ban or require the disclosure of harmful chemicals in a wide range of products—including plastics, personal care products, electronics, and building materials. The law also empowers Ecology to require companies to disclose full ingredient information to support regulatory decisions and protect public health.

TOXIC-FREE FUTURE

Toxic-Free Future is a national leader in environmental health research and advocacy. Through the power of science, education, and activism, Toxic-Free Future drives strong laws and corporate responsibility that protects the health of all people and the planet.

For more information: <https://toxicfreefuture.org/press-room/washington-adopts-new-pfas-protections-to-safeguard-public-health-and-prevent-pollution>

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