

Trappe's Drinking Water – Important Information to know about Forever Chemicals

We want our community to understand the challenges we are facing and the facts about our community's water. Water is a vital resource for our community, and the Borough Council's main objective is to protect and retain that resource. Currently, like many other municipalities, Trappe is looking toward the future to ensure we always are meeting the State's requirements for safe drinking water. "Forever chemicals," scientifically known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), are a group of synthetic chemicals that have been widely used in products like nonstick cookware, water- and stain-resistant fabrics, firefighting foam, and food packaging. Their persistence in the environment and human body has raised significant health concerns, including links to cancer, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, and developmental issues in children.

Pennsylvania's PFAS Drinking Water Standards

In January 2023, Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) established enforceable Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for two PFAS compounds in public drinking water:

- **PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic acid):** 14 parts per trillion (ppt)
- **PFOS (Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid):** 18 ppt

These regulations apply to all public water systems in the state, including those serving schools, healthcare facilities, and bottled water plants. Monitoring for these chemicals began in early 2024, with requirements varying based on system size

Federal EPA Regulations

In April 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced stricter federal MCLs for six PFAS compounds:

- **PFOA and PFOS:** 4.0 ppt each
- **PFNA, PFHxS, and HFPO-DA (GenX):** 10.0 ppt each (Question: only five are listed?)

Trappe and our neighboring community of Collegeville, have their water provided to them by Collegeville Trappe Joint Public Works Department, to date there is one well in Collegeville that exceeded the state limits, and it has been taken offline and the water out of our system. Although, the water from this well does not flow directly to Trappe, it is still collectively an issue we must face together. All wells currently online are under the permitted level by the State of Pennsylvania, as the graphic shows.

Active CTJPW Wells		
Average readings taken 2023 to 2025		
Well	PFOS (MCL - 18)	PFOA (MCL - 14)
WF	8.2	7.7
WF1	7.8	7.4
WF3	7.9	6.9
WF4	7.8	6.9
WF7	7.1	6.8
5	6.8	8.6
6A	9.7	6.9
8	9.2	7.9
9	3.2	4.1
10	8.9	8.9
12	8.8	10
14	8.7	13.6

Since last year, our Public Works Director, Joe Hastings, working with the Collegeville-Trappe Joint Public Works Committee, made up of six Council members from Collegeville and Trappe Boroughs, has been monitoring the Collegeville and Trappe wells on a regular basis. They have also been actively researching the best long-term remedies to reduce these contaminants.

However, the future reduction of EPA limits to only 4 parts per trillion requires additional analysis and a more comprehensive and costly remediation.

To identify the best solutions for our community, Public Works has commissioned further research and a revised system model from Entech Engineering, a firm which handles water treatment and environmental compliance, and has engaged a peer review from an independent engineering firm.

Public Works has been looking at these potential solutions:

- Install PFOA and PFOS treatment systems at each well.
- Install an interconnect with North Penn Water Authority (NPWA) to supplement Collegeville and Trappe’s water by installing a new 12-inch water main on Gravel Pike, or
- Install an interconnect with NPWA by installing a new 12-inch water main on 9th Ave.
- Install a centralized PFAS and PFOA treatment system at the well field near Waterworks Park

We are also monitoring new emerging technologies and other possible solutions as we become aware of them. This includes researching grants and loans to fund such projects.

The EPA has issued a recommendation that all states adopt a new MCL of 4 parts per trillion for both PFOA and PFOS by the year 2031. Public water systems nationwide must begin monitoring by 2027, which we have already begun to do. These federal standards are more stringent than Pennsylvania's current limits. Although, we are not sure if Pennsylvania will adopt this recommendation, The PA Department of Environmental Protection is working to align state regulations with federal standards. The Borough of Trappe is currently reviewing what this means for the future. Including a prudent approach to what the best resolution might be and what the cost of that resolution is to our taxpayers.

Trappe Borough is committed to meeting the most stringent regulations, but keep in mind while current testing reveals our wells are in the range of 6.8 to 13.6 parts per trillion with the majority under 9 parts per trillion, the worst reported cases in the state of Pennsylvania for PFAS see results ranging from 200 to 2,100 parts per trillion and the reported worst case in the nation from England Air Force Base, and Camp Lejeune saw levels exceeding 280,000 parts per trillion.

Rest assured; priority one is meeting all limits set by PA DEP to ensure safe drinking water in our community. The Borough Council is committed to preserving our own water supply and the use of our own water supply under the control of Collegeville Trappe Joint Public Works if possible. Trappe Borough Council will continue to take a calculated and measured response to ensure safe and clean drinking water while being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers.