

Changes in Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) Standards for Michigan Drinking Water

To more aggressively fight PFAS contamination, Michigan adopted new drinking water standards for public water systems in 2020. The new standards, proposed by EGLE and adopted by the legislature, exceeds the existing USEPA standards for PFOA and PFOS in drinking water (5 other PFAS chemicals limited as well – see chart below).

The regulations changed the groundwater clean-up criteria from 70ppt (parts per trillion) for PFOS and PFOA (EPA recommendations) to 8ppt for PFOA and 16ppt for PFOS.

While these new rules can be an important regulatory action, there remains concern about the “cocktail effect” of having two or more of the seven chemicals in combination even though each falls below the standard set for them. It has been suggested that a cumulative standard needs to be established. Moreover, compliance by the DOD with these standards is uncertain as the omnipresence of sovereign immunity has exempted federal entities from compliance with state level mandates in the past.

Contaminant	MCL (ng/L)	Chemical Abstract Services Registry Number (CASRN)
Perfluorononanoic Acid (PFNA)	6	375-95-1
Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA)	8	335-67-1
Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid (PFOS)	16	1763-23-1
Perfluorohexane Sulfonic Acid (PFHxS)	51	355-46-4

Hexafluoropropylene Oxide Dimer Acid (HFPO-DA) (a GenX compound)	370	13252-13-6
Perfluorobutane Sulfonic Acid (PFBS)	420	375-73-5
Perfluorohexanoic Acid (PFHxA)	400,000	307-24-4

Sources:

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MPART “PFAS MCLs and Drinking Water,” State of Michigan 2021