



Overview

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of human-made chemicals widely used and found in everyday products — from cookware and cosmetics to food packaging, drinking water, and agricultural land. Known as “[Forever Chemicals](#)” for their persistence in the environment and the human body, PFAS have been linked to [serious health risks](#), including cancer, reproductive harm, and immune system disruption. Some manufacturers have voluntarily phased out so-called long-chain PFAS, such as PFOA and PFOS, and replaced them with their short-chain cousins, but [early evidence](#) suggests that these are just as harmful. In response, [states have been enacting legislation](#) to reduce exposure to PFAS in a range of products and improve transparency around their use and presence.

Policy Options

- **Biosolids:** States can create guidelines for the frequency and methodology of PFAS sampling for facilities that create biosolids (Washington [SB 5033](#)).
- **Drinking Water:** To help reduce the presence of PFAS in drinking water supplies, states can create monitoring and reporting requirements for PFAS (Maine [L.D. 1326](#)), expand testing (Maine [L.D. 493](#)), and require notification to residents if PFAS exceed [maximum contaminant levels \(MCLs\)](#) (Delaware [S.B. 72](#)). There has also been expanded testing, monitoring, and educational outreach for PFAS in well water (Maine [L.D. 1604](#) & [L.D. 500](#)).
- **Firefighting Equipment:** States can ban the sale of firefighting equipment with intentionally added PFAS (New Jersey [A. 5195 / S. 3946](#)), establish take-back and disposal programs (Maine [L.D. 222](#)), and update firefighter PPE safety standards to eliminate unnecessary use of hazardous substances like PFAS (California [A.B. 1181](#)).
- **Health & Menstrual Products:** By defining and restricting harmful chemicals, including PFAS, states can establish maximum allowable thresholds that companies cannot exceed for menstrual products and other health products (New York [A.1502 / S.1548](#)).
- **Consumer Products:** Enacting phased restrictions on intentionally added PFAS in consumer products allows states to establish comprehensive protections while providing realistic timelines for phasing out the chemicals in everyday products such as cleaning products, cookware, dental floss, food packaging, and children’s products (California [SB 682](#)).

KEY POINTS

- Due to their widespread usage and continuous presence in the environment, PFAS are being found in the blood of animals and humans, causing a wide array of health problems. ([EPA](#))
- PFAS can be found in: agricultural biosolids, beauty and consumer products, non-stick items, food and food packaging, fish and livestock, firefighting equipment and foams, paints, sealants, drinking water, textiles, electronics, and paper. ([EPA](#))
- According to 2026 data, 176 million people in communities throughout the U.S. have drinking water that has tested positive for PFAS. ([EWG](#))

Other Resources

- **Safer States:** [State Action on PFAS in Consumer Products](#)
- **Institute of Policy Integrity, NYU School of Law:** [Evaluating the Full Cost of PFAS](#)
- **American Association for the Advancement of Science:** [What We Know: Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#)
- **Clean Water Fund & Community Action Works:** [Shopper’s Guide to Avoiding PFAS](#)

