

# **ACMUA PRESS RELEASE**

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## **ACMUA Addresses PFAS and LEAD**

New Jersey has chosen to more stringently regulate a class of chemicals known as per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that have been linked to certain illnesses, to levels significantly lower than currently regulated by the federal government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This is most likely attributed to growing national focus on risks to public health from chemicals in drinking water brought on largely by the Flint Michigan water crisis.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ("NJDEP") recently adopted a plan to set a "maximum contaminant level" (MCL) for perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), used in consumer products such as nonstick cookware, flame-retardant foams and fabrics. Traces of these substances persist in many New Jersey water systems including the primary source of Atlantic City's drinking water. The Atlantic City Municipal Utilities Authority ("ACMUA") has taken aggressive steps to remove these substances to achieve compliance with the new NJDEP Regulations.

In the early 1980's Atlantic City's groundwater sources were threatened by contamination migrating from an adjacent superfund classified cleanup site commonly known as Price's Pit. The decision at that time to relocate production wells to the FAA Technical Center was made by ACMUA staff with NJDEP approval.

A recent engineering study by TRC Environmental Corp., concluded that some PFAS chemicals have settled into groundwater and soil at the FAA Technical Center. Their study noted years of fire testing performed as early as the 1950's by various military units.

The migration of these substances in Atlantic City's water supply source raises a significant challenge for the ACMUA to adjust to meet the new NJDEP standard. Atlantic City water samples currently reveal that while PFNA is not detected, two other PFAS chemicals, perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) AND perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), are above proposed limits and significant treatment changes must be made to achieve compliance.

Studies of the effects of PFAS chemicals on public health reveal effects in animals however, most cannot conclude levels of risk exposure to humans. Moreover, PFAS are a group of manmade chemicals which include a smaller group of chemicals called PFC's. PFAS repels water and oil and are resistant to heat and chemical reactions. PFAS are used in production of some non-stick cookware, dental floss, microwave popcorn bag lining and stain proof coating, in "leak-proof" coatings, on food packaging materials, in fire-fighting foams, and in other uses. PFAS can enter drinking water through industrial release to water, air, or soil; discharges from sewage treatment plants; land application of contaminated sludge; and use of fire-fighting foam.

The Atlantic City Municipal Utilities Authority (“Authority”) embarked on a mission to develop a temporary solution and/or interim treatment techniques on mitigating or eliminating the customer exposure to regulated PFAS contaminants

- The Authority gathered a group of engineers, Authority staff and selected Board members to derive a solution for combating PFAS.
- The first plan of action was to exchange the existing Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) for the filter beds at the treatment plant in Pleasantville, NJ. The Authority conducted an emergency purchase of 50,000 pounds of *Virgin Filtrasorb* 400 GAC for five (5) filter beds.
- The Authority had to apply to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (“NJDEP”) for a temporary treatment permit in order to receive approval to move forward with plans to design, propose and install a pair of GAC vessels and media at three (3) well discharges to remove PFC’s from the raw water prior to it reaching the existing treatment plant for the water treatment plant to provide the necessary treatment process for distribution.
- One of the next steps was to isolate the surface water from the raw water intake or transmission process. The Authority closed the intake gate at the lower reservoir (Doughty Pond Dam) and concentrated on using groundwater supply as our main source of raw water for the water treatment process.
- Next the Authority engineers devised a design plan to install three (3) pairs of Carbon Vessels at three (3) of the Authority’s wells containing the highest levels of PFAS located at the FAA Technical Center.
- Installation of the vessels has been successful and are in full operation as of December 2021
- Due to coordinated combined effort on tackling the Authority’s PFAS regulated maximum contaminant levels we were able to successfully achieve *undetectable* levels of PFAS in the Authority’s water production.
- The next phase will involve the Authority seeking the assistance of both State and Federal legislative representatives to provide financial assistance in order to provide a permanent solution in order to maintain undetectable levels of PFAS in the water system.

#### **ACMUA Issues Notification Letters to Customers with Lead or Galvanized Service Lines**

Less than 6% of the Atlantic City Municipal Utilities Authority (ACMUA) customers were sent a certified letter on February 23, 2022 informing them that the composition of the line served is a lead or galvanized steel service line.

This letter was distributed in response to a recent State of New Jersey law, effective July 22, 2021, that requires public community water systems to inventory the known lead services lines in the distribution system and then notify all homeowners that have been identified with lead services within 30 days of completing the inventory. The utility is then required to replace these lines within ten (10) years. A lead service line may be owned by the public community water system, a property owner or both. Under the requirements of the law, **galvanized service lines are considered lead service lines.**

The following is an overview of key benchmarks that system owners are required to be completed from the time of the effective date of 7/22/21:

1. **60 Days (September 20, 2021)** – Compile and submit (on Form BWSE-20) an initial count showing the number of lead service lines and the number of service lines of unknown composition
2. **Six Months (January 22, 2022)** – Submit an initial service line inventory including location, material, and ownership of all lines, whether lead, non-lead or unknown material
3. **30 Days after Submittal of Initial Inventory** – Send written notice of the composition of the line to all users served by a lead service line
4. **One Year (July 22, 2022)** – Submit an updated inventory of service lines and an initial plan for replacing all lead service lines in its service area within 10 years; the plan must also provide for the average annual replacement of at least **10 percent** of all lead service lines.
5. **Two Years (July 22, 2023)** – Provide an updated inventory and certification that the system is in compliance with the provisions of the law

The law also requires **annual reports** detailing the system's progress until all lead services lines have been replaced.