

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER**

## **Deferral Issued for PFOA, PFOS and 1,4-Dioxane at Suffolk County Water Authority (SCWA)**

### **Why are you receiving this notice/information?**

You are receiving this notice because testing of our public water system found the chemicals perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and 1,4-dioxane in your drinking water. This is above New York State's maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA, 10 ppt for PFOS and 1 part per billion (ppb) for 1,4-dioxane in public drinking water systems. The MCL is set well below levels known or estimated to cause health effects. Consuming drinking water with PFOA, PFOS or 1,4-dioxane at or somewhat above the MCL does not pose a significant health risk. Your water continues to be acceptable for all uses. SCWA is working on a strict timetable to reduce levels below the MCL.

SCWA has submitted, and the New York State Department of Health (Department) has issued, a deferral to the SCWA. When a public water system is issued a deferral, the water system agrees to a schedule for corrective action and compliance with the new MCLs. In exchange, the Department agrees to defer enforcement actions, such as assessing fines, if the water district is meeting the established deadlines. We are required to update the Department and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services each calendar quarter on the status of our projects. If we do not meet the agreed upon deadlines, the Department can resume enforcement.

### **What are the health effects of PFOA/PFOS?**

The available information on the health effects associated with PFOA and PFOS, like many chemicals, comes from studies of high-level exposure in animals or humans. Less is known about the chances of health effects occurring from lower levels of exposure, such as those that might occur in drinking water. As a result, finding lower levels of chemicals in drinking water prompts water suppliers and regulators to take precautions that include notifying consumers and steps to reduce exposure.

PFOA and PFOS has caused a wide range of health effects when studied in animals that were exposed to high levels. Additional studies of high-level exposures of PFOA and PFOS in people provide evidence that some of the health effects seen in animals may also occur in humans. The most consistent findings in animals were effects on the liver and immune system and impaired fetal growth and development. The United States Environmental Protection Agency considers PFOA and PFOS as having suggestive evidence for causing cancer based on studies of animals exposed to high levels of this chemical over their entire lifetimes.

At the level of PFOA and PFOS detected in your water, exposure from drinking water and food preparation is well below PFOA and PFOS exposures associated with health effects.

### **What are the health effects of 1,4-dioxane?**

Laboratory studies show that 1,4-dioxane caused liver cancer in animals exposed at high levels throughout their lifetime. Other types of cancer have also been reported, although less consistently than liver cancer. There is no evidence of 1,4-dioxane cancer effects in humans. The United States Environmental Protection Agency considers 1,4-dioxane a likely human carcinogen based upon studies of animals exposed to high levels of this chemical over their entire lifetimes.

At the level of 1,4-dioxane detected in your water, exposure from drinking water and food preparation is well below 1,4-dioxane exposures associated with health effects.

### **What is New York State doing about PFOA, PFOS and 1,4-Dioxane in public drinking water?**

The New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) has adopted a drinking water regulation that requires all public water systems to test for PFOA, PFOS and 1,4-dioxane. If found above the MCLs, the water supplier must take steps to lower the level to meet the standard. Exceedances of the MCL signal that steps should be taken by the water system to reduce contaminant levels.

### **What is being done to remove these contaminants?**

SCWA is installing granular activated carbon treatment systems at impacted wells to remove PFOA and PFOS and advanced oxidation process systems to remove 1,4-dioxane. Details regarding the installation status of treatment for 1,4-dioxane and PFOA and PFOS for the well or wells in your area are updated monthly and can be found on our website at: <https://www.scwa.com/emerging-contaminants/>. In the interim, SCWA will make every effort to operationally minimize the concentration of 1,4-dioxane, PFOA and PFOS in the distribution system at any given time. Additional information will be shared as further testing and progress occurs. This process is similar for any chemical detected in public drinking water that requires mitigation. The compliance timetable will ensure that your drinking water will meet the MCL as rapidly as possible. The deferral is effective until August 25, 2022.

Residents of the Town of Southold are advised that SCWA purchases wholesale water from the Riverhead Water District (RWD) for resale to our Southold customers and that the RWD has also been issued a deferral by the New York State Department of Health for PFOA and PFOS. SCWA's Southold customers may view information on the RWD deferral and steps the district is taking in order to comply by visiting their website at: <https://www.townofriverheadny.gov/pview.aspx?id=2492&catID=118>.

### **Where can I get more information?**

For more information, please contact Suffolk County Water Authority Customer Service at 631-698-9500 or by mail at 2045 Route 112, Coram, NY 11727. You can also contact the Suffolk County Department of Health Services at 631-852-5810.

If you have additional questions about these contaminants and your health, talk to your health care provider who is most familiar with your health history and can provide advice and assistance about understanding how drinking water may affect your personal health.

**Public Water System ID#** 511050526

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