

# Joint release: Perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) in Security-Widefield-Fountain

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DENVER - The U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) periodically requires public drinking water systems that serve more than 10,000 people to sample for selected contaminants of emerging concern and uses the information to regulate contaminants in the future under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

In October 2015, EPA released the latest results from its national sampling program. Data indicated that samples from public water sources tests taken southeast of Colorado Springs near Fountain Creek and Windmill Gulch, detected [Perfluorinated Compounds \(PFCs\)](#). PFCs are a family of human-made chemicals that do not occur naturally in the environment. These compounds are found in firefighting foams, coating additives and surface protection products for carpets and clothing, and other common commercial products. No other drinking water samples in Colorado showed the presence of PFCs. However, this is a national issue impacting about 90 public drinking water systems in 27 states across the U.S.

Some public water sources had concentrations of PFCs above a temporary health advisory established by EPA in 2009. Drinking water provided by public water systems southeast of Colorado Springs meet the health standards in the Colorado Primary Drinking Water Regulations and may be used for drinking, bathing, and all indoor and outdoor uses. Water utilities in these three communities are collecting additional water samples and working with

the Colorado Department of Public Health (CDPHE) and EPA to ensure drinking water PFC levels are below EPA's current health advisory level.

Residents who receive their water from a private household well, are within the [PFC area of investigation](#) and are concerned about PFC levels, should consider testing their well water. Information about EPA approved laboratories that conduct this testing are available [here](#) or by calling (719) 575-8602. El Paso County Public Health (EPCPH) Laboratory is not able to test for PFCs. Studies have shown that certain treatment systems are effective in removing PFCs from drinking water. Reverse osmosis (RO) has been shown as a reliable under-the-sink treatment option. These devices can be purchased at local home improvement stores. Residents with questions about their public drinking water, should contact their local water provider.

State and local governments do not have authority over unregulated contaminants such as PFCs. Since they are not regulated, water providers are not required to treat drinking water or routinely sample for PFCs. However, out of an abundance of caution, the EPA, state, and local health agencies are working together with public drinking water systems in the area to understand and address this emerging issue and reduce exposure to PFCs as recommended by EPA.

Human studies show increased exposure to PFCs might increase the risk for some health effects. However, these studies have scientific limitations, and results have not been consistent. The most consistent health effects in human studies are increases in blood cholesterol and uric acid levels, which may be associated with an increased risk of heart disease or high blood pressure. Studies have shown more limited findings related to low infant birth weights. It is not yet clear whether PFCs cause cancer, some studies have shown associations with higher level exposures to PFCs and increased risk of kidney and testicular cancer in humans and liver, pancreas and testicular cancer in laboratory animals. It is important to understand that there is a large amount of uncertainty on exposure levels and health effects for PFCs. For health information, visit CDC's site about [perfluorinated chemicals and your health](#).