



800 Cushman Street
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Telephone (907) 459-6770
Fax (907) 452-5913

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Dear Property Owner:

Over the past year, the City of Fairbanks (City) has connected 44 properties to the municipal water system in response to the presence of perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) in private water-supply wells near the Regional Fire Training Center (RFTC) at 1710 30th Avenue. These properties have PFC concentrations above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) lifetime health advisory level for drinking water which is 70 nanograms per liter (ng/L) for PFOS, PFOA, or the sum of the two. Per City Council Ordinance No. 6060, municipal water service connections are also planned for properties with combined PFOS and PFOA concentrations above 85 percent (59.5 ng/L) of the lifetime health advisory level.

Certain residents are concerned that PFCs from well water could remain in their plumbing systems after connection to municipal water. This is an unlikely scenario. It is common for iron or other minerals to 'settle out' of solution in standing water, or for hard-water scale to form on plumbing fixtures and pipes. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the City, and the City's consultants each researched this question independently by reviewing literature on water heaters, PFC chemistry, and actions of other states who have connected residents to municipal water systems. The agencies concluded that under conditions typical of Fairbanks groundwater PFCs are highly soluble, therefore we would generally expect PFCs to remain dissolved in water rather than attaching to sediments or scale within water heaters or other parts of a home plumbing system.

We are aware that water heater tanks typically accumulate hard-water scale and sand or sediment particles over time, exactly how much depends on the hardness of the water and presence or absence of inlet filters. At this time the City does not plan to sample the sediment from individual water-heaters for PFCs. We suggest that home owners maintain their water heaters per manufacturer recommendations, for example, by periodically replacing the anode rod and fully draining the tank to remove accumulated sediment.

The 44 service connections to municipal water provided by the City are within the Golden Heart Utilities (GHU) or College Utilities Corporation (CUC) service areas. When GHU or CUC connects a new property to water service, standard practice is to drain and pressure test the system with the new water source. This alone removes most of the water currently in the system. Given the solubility of PFCs and the differences in flow rates and plumbing configurations, we recommend running all the taps in the house at the same time, at full volume—turning off the cold water taps after 5 minutes and just running the hot taps for an additional 15 minutes. This will ensure that you have flushed any remnant water that came from your disconnected well.

Please contact us if you have further questions regarding municipal water connections. If you have other questions, please see the list of contacts on the enclosed Fact Sheet to help direct you to the most appropriate person or agency for your inquiry. You may also visit the City of Fairbanks website, <http://www.fairbanksalaska.us/rftc-groundwater-contamination/>, or at the DEC's site summary page, <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/sites/FairbanksFireTrainingCenter.htm>, for maps and other information about the water cleanup effort.

CITY OF FAIRBANKS



Andrew Ackerman
Environmental Manager

