



# PFAS Fact Sheet

## About PFAS

- » PFAS chemicals have been produced since the 1940s and are found in everyday products.
- » Common uses of PFAS include: nonstick cookware, stain and water resistant carpets and fabrics, coatings on some food packaging (especially microwave popcorn bags and fast-food wrappers), components of fire-fighting foam, and some dental flosses. Because of this, PFAS are also present in our bodies, our environment, and biosolids.
- » Wastewater treatment plants recover valuable resources from wastewater such as carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus and need to be protected. Wastewater treatment plants are not sources of PFAS. The PFAS entering a wastewater treatment plant pass through the plant. The most effective way to reduce the amount of PFAS in our wastewater and our environment is to reduce the source of PFAS (source reduction).

### DEFINITIONS

- PFAS:** Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of man-made chemicals that are resistant to heat, water, and oil.
- PFOS:** Perfluorooctane sulfonate is a specific substance in the large group of man-made chemicals.
- WWTP:** Wastewater Treatment Plant

## What MCES is doing now to help address PFAS

### We know:

PFAS impacts all water sectors.  
It's a problem for all of us.



PFAS management is challenging, expensive, and pushes the limits of available technology.



We need to work together to reduce PFAS.



### We commit to:

#### Resources

Studying the issue to understand the full impacts of how PFAS affects our systems and customers and will work towards solutions.



#### Partnership

MCES will continue to collaborate with stakeholders and advocacy groups to gather information and develop solutions.



#### Sharing knowledge

MCES will draw on past experiences solving costly, complex water quality challenges.



## MCES PFAS Data

- » MCES began sampling for PFAS in Empire Wastewater Treatment Plant's effluent in 2020. That information is available publicly here: [pca.state.mn.us/data/wastewater-data-browser](https://pca.state.mn.us/data/wastewater-data-browser)
- » You can find data for all of our facilities here. For the Empire WWTP select: **Met Council – Empire WWTP (MN0045845)**.

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## How MCES is using proven methods to reduce pollutants at the source for PFAS

- » MCES has a history of partnering with communities, watersheds, and industries to successfully achieve source reduction and will continue to do so as the region works together to address the PFAS issue.
- » MCES is aware of the PFAS issues facing the region and has been working with industrial customers to identify sources of PFAS in the regional wastewater system and as possible, reduce PFAS at the source.
- » To date, MCES has worked with its industrial customers to:

*Our work continues*

### 2007-2014

Reduce PFOS coming into the Metropolitan WWTP by working with the source to identify and require changes at the facility that would reduce PFOS discharge to the regional wastewater system.

### 2010

Surveyed all Industrial Permit holders to identify PFAS-containing products in use. This effort allowed MCES to identify sources of PFAS and also resulted in a reduction of PFAS discharged to the regional wastewater system as companies chose to stop using PFAS containing products once identified.

### October 2020

MCES conducted monitoring in the Empire WWTP collection system to identify industrial customers discharging PFAS compounds to the regional wastewater system. MCES will work with industrial customers to reduce the amount of PFAS being discharged.

## What you can do to protect the environment



### COOKWARE

- » Don't use non-stick cookware.
- » Cook with cast iron, stainless steel, ceramic, stoneware, and glass.



### FOOD PACKAGING

- » Cut back on fast food and carryout – PFAS is used in the cardboard containers and paper wrappers.
- » Make popcorn on the stove or with an air popper instead of microwave popcorn in PFAS treated bags.



### PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

- » PFAS has been found in products ranging from eyeliner to dental floss.
- » Search Skin Deep [ewg.org/skindeep](http://ewg.org/skindeep) from the Environmental Working Group to find information on products you use.



### STAIN-RESISTANT AND WATERPROOF FABRICS

- » Avoid buying items that are labeled "stain-resistant", "water-resistant", or "water proof".
- » Carpet and rugs are a major source of exposure for infants and toddlers.



### WATER

- » Visit the Minnesota Department of Health website [health.state.mn.us](http://health.state.mn.us) to learn about PFAS and drinking water.
- » Wash skin that has come into contact with PFAS-containing foam with soap and water.

To learn more visit: [metrocouncil.org/landapp](http://metrocouncil.org/landapp)

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**  
[epa.gov/chemical-research/research-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas](http://epa.gov/chemical-research/research-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas)

**Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)**  
[health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfas.html](http://health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfas.html)

**Water Environment Federation (WEF)**  
[wef.org/pfas](http://wef.org/pfas)

**Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)**  
[pca.state.mn.us/waste/pfas-pollution](http://pca.state.mn.us/waste/pfas-pollution)