

# Understanding PFAS and Drinking Water



**Suburban Water Systems**  
A SouthWest Water Company

*Suburban Water Systems provides high-quality water and reliable service.*

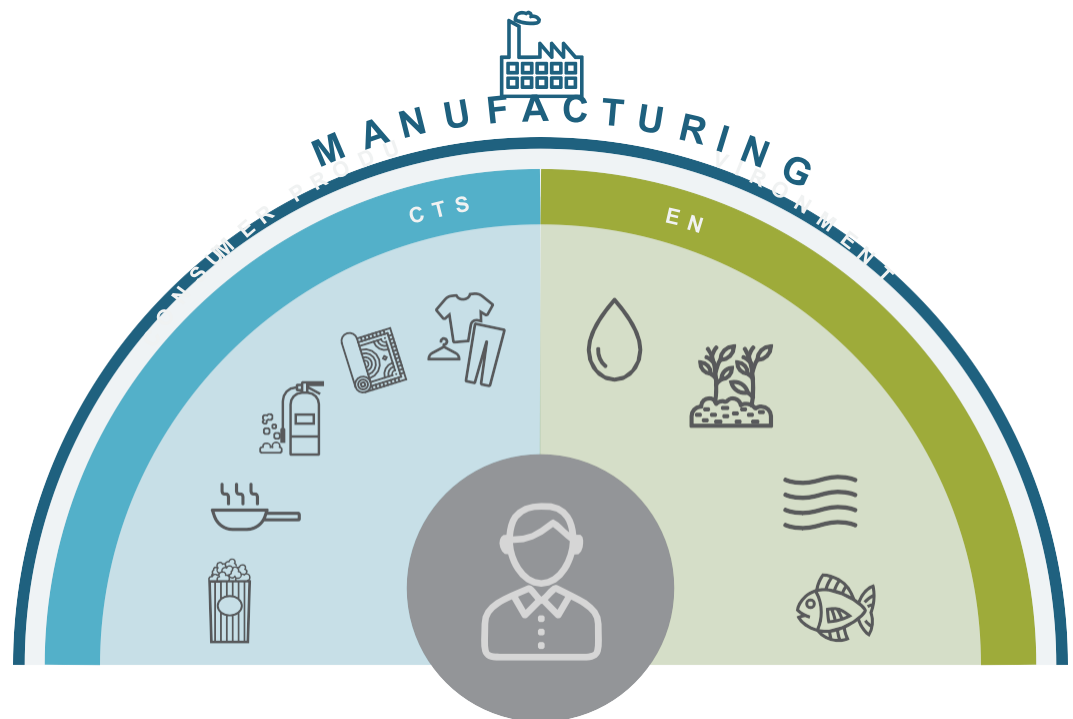
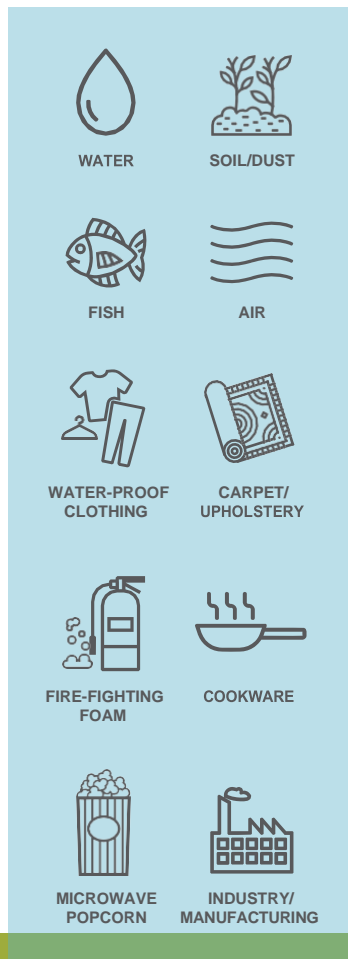
## What are PFAS?

Per- and Polyfluorinated chemicals (PFAS) are a complex family of more than 3,000 manmade chemicals, including perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), and perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS). These chemicals are prevalent in the environment and consumer products. Although PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS are no longer manufactured in the United States, they are used in a variety of industries worldwide.

PFAS are resistant to heat, water and oil, and have been used for decades in hundreds of industrial and consumer product applications.

## Where can PFAS be found?

These chemicals can be found in thousands of products we use daily, such as water-resistant clothing, carpet, food wrappers, non-stick cookware, cleaning products and more. Most people around the world have measurable amounts of PFAS in their own blood and are typically exposed by eating or drinking contaminated food or liquids (including water), breathing or touching products treated with PFAS, such as carpets or clothing.



Over time, these chemicals have entered our water supplies through manufacturing, landfills and wastewater runoff. Hundreds of water agencies throughout California and thousands throughout the U.S. are challenged with the presence of PFAS in drinking water supplies – even at very low levels.

## Detecting PFAS in water supplies

The California State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Drinking Water (DDW) has established guidelines for PFOS, PFOA, and PFHxS, including a "Notification Level" and "Response Level." Recently, the state issued orders requiring testing for PFOA, PFOS, and PFHxS to more than 200 public water systems, many near airports and military sites where these chemicals have been heavily used.

Water agencies with groundwater wells testing above 5.1 parts per trillion (ppt) of PFOA, 6.5 ppt of PFOS, and 3 ppt of PFHxS must notify governing bodies of their presence in drinking water – this is the Notification Level. For groundwater wells testing above 10 ppt of PFOA, 40 ppt of PFOS, and 20 ppt of PFHxS must, DDW recommends the agency stop using the well or provide treatment – the Response Level. A "part-per-trillion" is the equivalent of four grains of sugar dissolved in an Olympic sized swimming pool.

## Suburban Water PFAS detection

While Suburban Water Systems was not required by the state to test for PFOA or PFOS, we voluntarily tested four of the drinking water supply wells in the Main San Gabriel Basin that serve our Whittier and La Mirada water systems.

**The results showed that the levels of PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS found in these four wells did not exceed the Response Level, but do exceed the Notification Levels**, requiring notification to its governing body, the California Public Utilities Commission, and the governing body of any local agency whose jurisdiction includes the areas supplied with drinking water by Suburban.

**For more information, please visit:**

**United States Environmental Protection Agency:**  
[epa.gov/PFAS](http://epa.gov/PFAS)

## Providing high-quality water and reliable service

The origin of the contaminant in our water supply at this time is unknown, however Suburban is working with the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) and the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster

to determine the origin. Suburban is also working with the State Water Board – Division of Drinking Water and WRD to identify blending and treatment opportunities to reduce the PFOS and PFOA levels in Suburban's drinking water.

Suburban is using alternate sources to blend down or replace water from these wells to minimize levels of PFOA and PFOS in our water. We are committed to delivering high-quality water that meets all state and federal requirements to the customers we serve.

### Did you know?

- Suburban often goes beyond what is required to monitor for constituents that have known health risks.
- We use only independent, state-certified water quality laboratories for testing.
- We test for more than 100 chemical and pollutants and take approximately 9,000 tests each year.
- An analysis of these water test results can be found in Suburban's Annual Water Quality Report.

**State Water Resource Control Board | Division of Drinking**

**Water:** [waterboards.ca.gov/pfas/](http://waterboards.ca.gov/pfas/)

**United States Food and Drug Administration:**

[fda.gov/food/chemicals/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas](http://fda.gov/food/chemicals/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas)

