

Forever Chemicals

The federal government is committed to protecting the health of Canadians, as well as safeguarding the environment. The Government is taking additional steps to address the potential harm of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as “forever chemicals,” commonly found in everyday products, including clothing, electronics, food packaging and cosmetics.

PFAS are a class of thousands of extremely persistent human-made substances. They are used in a wide range of products for their waterproofing, oil resistance or non-stick properties.

The Government is publishing the State of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Report. The report concludes that the class of PFAS, excluding fluoropolymers, is harmful to human health and the environment.



Exposure to PFAS can adversely affect multiple organs and systems including the liver, kidneys, thyroid, immune system, nervous system, metabolism and body weight, and reproduction and development. In the environment, PFAS are harmful to wildlife and can build up in living organisms. These substances do not break down easily and remain in the environment for long periods of time.

To address these risks, the Government of Canada is taking steps to propose the addition of the class of PFAS, excluding fluoropolymers, to Part 2 of Schedule 1 to the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA). Through a step-by-step approach, the Government will prioritize the protection of health and the environment while considering factors such as the availability of alternatives. Phase 1, starting in

2025, will address PFAS in firefighting foams to better protect firefighters and the environment. Phase 2 will focus on limiting exposure to PFAS in products that are not needed for the protection of human health, safety, or the environment. This will include products like cosmetics, food packaging materials, and textiles.

“Today, the Government is taking a significant step forward to better protect workers, firefighters, and all Canadians from ‘forever chemicals.’ Science shows that the ongoing use of PFAS can harm both the environment and human health. With this announcement, we are leading the way with our partners—including Indigenous peoples and industry experts—to protect not only the health of our ecosystems and Canadians but also the resilience of our economy. In coming months, we will consult Canadians on proposed federal actions to improve transparency of information on the presence of substances of concern in products, including PFAS. These actions position us among the world’s leaders in tackling harmful PFAS exposure,” said The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Beginning in 2025, the Government of Canada will also require manufacturing and other facilities to report the use of PFAS to the National Pollutant Release Inventory. This data will improve understanding of how PFAS are used in Canada, help evaluate possible industrial PFAS contamination, and support efforts to reduce environmental and human exposure to harmful substances.

“PFAS have negative effects on our health and Canadians deserve to be protected. Our government is taking action on PFAS to keep Canadians and our environment safe from the harmful exposure to these chemicals,” said The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health.

Canadians are invited to comment on the Risk Management Approach and the Proposed Order to add the class of PFAS, excluding fluoropolymers, to Part 2 of Schedule 1 to CEPA, until May 7, 2025.

The Government of Canada will continue to engage all interested parties over the coming years to protect the health of Canadians and the environment.