



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services

Robert R. Scott, Commissioner



June 27, 2023

Subject: Testing for PFAS in Floor Wax Stripping Wastewater at Schools

Dear Superintendent or Principal,

During the summer of 2022, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) conducted sampling and analysis for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in floor wax stripping wastewater at several schools in the state. PFAS are a group of synthetic, fluorinated chemicals that impart oil, water, stain, and soil repellency to a range of industrial and commercial products including cleaning agents, food packaging, textiles, carpets/upholstery, floor coatings and other related materials.

The goal of the NHDES' sampling initiative was to assess for PFAS in wastewaters related to the annual floor wax stripping/cleaning activities that are being discharged to the ground via the septic system at schools that are not connected to sewer. Results from the sampling initiative confirm that PFAS were present in many floor waxes and wax strippers, and floor wax stripping wastewater contained PFAS at all of the schools that were sampled. Based on the results of the school wastewater sampling, **NHDES highly encourages your school to sample its floor wax stripping wastewater for PFAS, particularly if your school disposes of its wastewater via a septic system.**

Please note that New Hampshire has groundwater standards for four PFAS compounds including perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), and perfluorohexanesulphonic acid (PFHxS). In accordance with Administrative Rules Env-Wq 402.07 and 402.08 - *Groundwater Discharge Permits and Registrations - Prohibited Discharges/Permit Required*, discharges of wastewater to the ground or groundwater that contain regulated contaminants above state standards are prohibited unless the wastewater first receives treatment to reduce contaminant levels prior to discharge. Wastewater generated during floor stripping operations is considered non-domestic wastewater and must comply with the above-referenced criteria.

NHDES' [Laboratory Testing Guidelines for PFAS](#) provides guidance on PFAS testing and a list of accredited laboratories that offer PFAS testing. Alternatively, your school may already be familiar with PFAS sampling and have connections to one or more laboratories that perform PFAS testing because of drinking water compliance requirements. It is recommended to contact the laboratory prior to sampling to discuss sample collection procedures specific to this type of wastewater.

NHDES is available to answer any questions you have regarding sampling procedures, laboratory analysis options, and interpretation of results. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at (603)271-8647 or gwdischarge@des.nh.gov.

Regards,

Jennifer Harfmann, Ph.D.

Groundwater Discharge Program | Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau

Cc: Andrew Koff, Stephen Roy, Jonathan Whaland, NHDES; Amy Clark, NHDOE