

FAQ on PFAS Investigation at Lacks Industries in Cascade Township

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is working with Lacks Industries, Inc. to investigate groundwater contamination related to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, at its former plating company in Cascade Township. Lacks owned and operated a zinc die casting and plating plant at 1601 Galbraith SE. More information on this investigation can be found below.

Note: A community briefing session is currently planned for the evening of Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the Wisner Center, located at 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE in Cascade Township. Additional details on the meeting will be provided when they are available.

For questions about PFAS and health, please call the MDHHS Division of Environmental Health hotline at 800-648-6942, or the Kent County Health Department at 616-632-6900; residents can also email KCPFAS@kentcountymi.gov.

For questions about the investigation, please contact the DEQ Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278.

1. Why is this investigation taking place?

Lacks previously owned and operated a zinc die casting and plating plant. The DEQ now knows that some plating operations, like the former Lacks Cascade facility, used products that contained PFAS, so it's important to determine if PFAS has impacted groundwater at this 1601 Galbraith SE. Lacks has been conducting groundwater clean-up for metals and boron at this site for more than 20 years. However, at the time of use at the former Cascade site, PFAS was not a recognized groundwater contaminant.

2. What areas are included in this investigation?

This investigation pertains to 1601 Galbraith S.E. only – it does not include or impact any current manufacturing sites being operated by Lacks Enterprises today. Please see [this map](#) for reference.

3. What information is currently known about this site as it relates to the presence of PFAS?

In August and September 2018, the DEQ and Lacks sampled a purge well and four monitoring wells for PFAS down gradient of the former Lacks facility. The purge well and monitoring test results showed the presence of PFAS, including PFOS and PFOA, in groundwater south and southeast of the former Lacks facility.

- The amount of PFOS plus PFOA found in the monitoring wells and purge wells are between non-detect and 270 parts per trillion, or ppt.
- Three of the monitoring wells and the purge well had levels above the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's lifetime health advisory level, or LHA, of 70 ppt. One monitoring well did not have detectable levels of PFAS.
- PFAS was detected in groundwater above the LHA nearly a mile downgradient of the former Lacks facility. The extent of the PFAS contamination has not yet been determined.

By way of background, a purge well is used to remove contaminated water from an aquifer and to reduce or stop the movement of the contamination. Monitoring wells are used for testing groundwater. These wells are in place to monitor and clean up groundwater contaminated with metals and boron from the former Lacks plating facility.

4. What is being done about this issue?

The DEQ and its public health partners, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, or DHHS, and the Kent County Health Department, or KCHD, are working with Lacks to promptly and systematically address this issue to protect public health. The first phase of this work includes:

- a. Immediately contacting homeowners using domestic wells in the “Phase 1 Response and Investigation Area” ([shown on the map here](#)) to sample their wells for PFAS.
- b. Providing alternate water while testing is taking place and where drinking water levels are above the LHA of 70 ppt (PFOS + PFOA).
- c. Conducting additional PFAS investigations using existing groundwater monitoring wells.
- d. Conducting long term monitoring at drinking water wells and groundwater monitoring wells to ensure concentrations remain stable and below the LHA of 70 ppt (PFOS + PFOA).
- e. Providing a plan and timeline to stop discharge of the purge water to Walden Lake at levels that are greater than the water quality standard of 12 ppt for PFOS.

Further phases of PFAS investigation will be determined based on the results of the Phase 1 work. Please see the “Additional Evaluation Area” shown on the [map](#).

5. What are the next steps in this investigation?

During October and November, groundwater samples will be collected from the network of monitoring wells and drinking water wells as generally shown in the “Phase 1 Response and Investigation Area” on the [map](#). The DEQ, our public health partners and Lacks are working to identify which wells will be part of the first round of testing.

6. Who is affected by this potential contamination?

Most residents in the investigation area are on municipal water and **are not** affected by this potential contamination. **If residents are on municipal water, you do not need to do anything differently, and you do not need to test your water for PFAS.** This investigation focuses on people with their own drinking water wells that may be in the path of groundwater contamination from the former Lacks facility.

7. How did the DEQ determine the target sampling area for this investigation?

The target sampling area for residential wells considers the location of the residential wells relative to the known locations where PFAS and other historic contamination has been detected in groundwater. This evaluation also considers the need for recommending bottled water and/or point-of-use filters to residents while the investigation is ongoing.

8. What can residents do to reduce potential exposure to PFAS that may be in drinking water wells while this investigation is ongoing?

Residents in the area may take actions (e.g., use of bottled water for drinking and cooking or use of filters) to reduce potential exposures to PFAS that may be in their drinking water wells while the investigation is on-going. Residents who are interested in installing their own filtration system may find [In-Home Water Filtration Systems for PFAS Reduction](#) to be a helpful resource.

9. There are two lakes downstream from Lacks. Have they been tested for PFAS?

The two lakes downstream of Lacks have been sampled for PFAS. The DEQ anticipates having those results in the next several weeks. In the short term, residents are advised to follow the fish consumption advisory for Walden Lake and the statewide advisory for Wood Lake.

10. What if residents not included in the investigation area, but are concerned about potential PFAS in their wells?

Residents not included in the investigation and who are interested in testing their own well may choose to contact an environmental consultant or testing company. Residents who choose to test their wells independently are encouraged to share those results with the DEQ, DHHS or KCHD.