

Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

What are Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that includes PFOA, PFOS, GenX, and many other chemicals that all contain fluorine. PFAS have been manufactured and used by a variety of industries for the manufacture of many consumer products around the globe, including the United States since the 1940s.

What have PFAS historically been used for?

PFAS chemicals historically have been used for fire suppression, as well as in numerous consumer and household products. For example, these chemicals are used in the manufacture of a variety of industrial and commercial products such as textiles, aqueous film forming foams, metal finishing, semiconductors, paper and food packaging, coating additives, cleaning products, polishes, waxes, cosmetics, paints, and pesticides. The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has additional [examples](#) of PFAS use in common consumer products.

Is PFAS used in oil and gas activities in Pennsylvania?

There is no record that shows PFAS has been used in oil and gas development activities in Pennsylvania. Even a *New York Times* article which alleged that certain PFAS foundation chemicals *might have* been used ultimately [concluded](#) that there is no known use of PFAS despite all the public innuendo to the contrary. The anti-natural gas organization Physicians for Social Responsibility was also forced to admit after searching through tens of thousands of oil and gas well completion records on [FracFocus](#) that it “did not find any uses of PFAS.”

So why the allegations regarding oil and gas?

Anti-energy activists have sought to prey upon legitimate concerns regarding PFAS and its potential to impact water supplies to make baseless allegations against the oil and gas industry. As reported by Energy In Depth, several of the organizations making these allegations are funded by deep-pocketed foundations such as the Park Foundation, Heinz Endowments, and others which have financed anti-natural gas campaigns to restrict or ban domestic energy production.

Where can I get more information?

Both the [U.S. EPA](#) as well as the [PA DEP](#) have websites devoted to better understanding PFAS, their use in everyday consumer products, and steps that can be taken to minimize risk and exposure. Additionally, the [Environmental Council of the States](#) has compiled data, information and regulatory responses from a variety of states.