How to Read Your Private Well PFAS Lab Report

A lab report is a record of what tests were completed on your water and the results of the testing.

See definitions of common water quality report **terms at a glance** on the final page.

How to Read the Different Sections of Your Report

The first section of your lab report identifies where and when your sample was taken. This is important for:

- Record keeping.
- Helping water quality professionals address potential issues with the well.

The second section of your lab report is titled "PFAS Testing". This is where your results are reported. There are a lot of columns in this section, the most important of these are "**Analyte**", "**Results**", and "**Units**". This tells you:

- What the test was looking for.
- How much was found.*

The other columns may vary depending on what tests you ordered. They are present for quality control and quality assurance. They show the method the lab used and their confidence in the results.

*Note: Units are reported in ng/L (nanograms per liter) or ppt (parts per trillion).

ng/L and **ppt**: both equal 1 billionth of a gram.

The final section of the lab report contains reference materials including a table titled “Drinking Water Public Health Values for Result Interpretation”, a list of abbreviations, and a list of Responsible Parties.

PFAS compounds **are not** included in this section. The Wisconsin Department of health services (DHS) has established Drinking water Health Advisories for 18 PFAS.

The DHS uses a hazard index approach to calculate the risk from exposure to multiple PFAS.

Take your results and plug them into the PFAS Assessment Tool: https://www.seagrant.wisc.edu/our-work/focus-areas/emerging-contaminants/evaluating-the-risk-from-pfas-in-your-drinking-water/

Follow recommendations from the PFAS Assessment tool:

If Hazard Index is no, continue to use water as normal

If Hazard Index is yes, stop using the water for drinking and preparing food, continue to **Page 3** for recommended actions.

What is a Hazard Index?

A hazard index takes multiple health guidelines into account at the same time. As PFAS are commonly found together, this approach gives a clearer representation of the health risk. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWyQgP7F0mM

Substance	Health Guidance
PFOS	4 ng/L
PFOA	4 ng/L
FOSA	4 ng/L
NEtFOSA	4 ng/L
NEtFOSAA	4 ng/L
NEtFOSE	4 ng/L
PFNA	10 ng/L
PFHxS	10 ng/L
GenX	10 ng/L
PFDA	300 ng/L
PFDoA	500 ng/L
DONA	3,000 ng/L
PFUnA	3,000 ng/L
PFBA	10,000 ng/L
PFTeA	10,000 ng/L
NFHxA	150,000 ng/L
PFODA	400,000 ng/L
PFBS	2,000 ng/L

https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/pfas.htm

Actions you may choose to take if the **hazard index is yes**.

Every well is unique, which means the steps that need to be taken to make sure your water is safe for use will also be unique.

Consider testing your well again to confirm your results.

Reach out to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) at dhsenvhealth@dhs.Wisconsin.gov or 608-266-2817 to learn more about the PFAS present in your well and their health risks.

Visit their PFAS webpage here: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/pfas.htm.

Reach out to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Private Well Specialist for your county to learn about private well installation and contamination: dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Wells/PrivateWaterSupply.html.

Visit their PFAS Dashboard here: https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS.

Reach out to the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) at DspsSbPlbgTech@wi.gov or 608-267-9421 if you have questions about plumbing.

Curious about what else you might want to test your well for? Check out this factsheet from the Groundwater Coordinating Council and the Wisconsin DNR: dnr.wisconsin.gov/sites/default/files/topic/DrinkingWater/Publications/DG023.pdf

Terms at a Glance

Analyte - Specific contaminant being tested for.

Analysis Method - EPA approved steps used to complete each test.

Result - Amount or concentration of a contaminant found in your water.

Units - Standard measurement used to report the amount of a contaminant.

Blank – A sample that does not contain any analyte.

LOD -Limit of Detection, the smallest amount of a contaminant the lab equipment can distinguish from a blank.

LOQ - Limit of Quantitation, the smallest amount of a contaminant the lab equipment can accurately and precisely measure.

F - Flagged, this result is in between the LOD and LOQ and cannot be accurately or precisely measured.

Resource Guide

Find more resources for drinking water and groundwater on the Wisconsin DHS website: dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/drinking.htm

The Wisconsin DNR provides grants to help address contamination in private wells. Learn about eligibility and covered expenses on their website: dnr.wisconsin.gov/aid/WellCompensation.html

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