

PFAS and EPA: A quick reference guide from Victoria's environmental regulator



Environment
Protection
Authority Victoria



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Fact sheet

What is PFAS?

PFAS (per-and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) are a group of manufactured chemicals used in many industrial and household products. PFAS have been used commonly in firefighting foams. Sites where industries used these foams have elevated PFAS levels in the environment. PFAS have not been manufactured in Australia.

Where is PFAS found?

Most of us are exposed to very low levels of PFAS in everyday life from common items including some non-stick cooking equipment, furniture and carpets treated for stain resistance, clothing and fast food or packaged food containers.

There are low background levels of PFAS in the environment across Victoria. Some sites have higher levels due to past use of PFAS, mainly in the form of firefighting foams.

What is EPA's advice?

EPA takes a precautionary approach to PFAS and has rigorous regulations to ensure it is safely managed, transported and disposed.

There are a number of options to safely reuse soils with low levels of PFAS including infrastructure development, old quarry site rehabilitation and the like. Anywhere where soil is proposed to be stored, reused or deposited, the safety of the surrounding community will be ensured.

While scientific research continues to be undertaken, EPA, consistent with federal [guidelines](#) from the Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth), takes a precautionary approach and advises people to reduce their exposure to PFAS. We also recommend that people follow EPA's health advice for specific sites, which is published on our website at:

www.epa.vic.gov.au/pfas

What is EPA's role as the regulator of pollution and waste?

EPA regulates the disposal, reuse and management of PFAS affected materials, like soil, in line with Victoria's environment protection regulations. For example, when it comes to dealing with soils, an EPA application and approval is required.

EPA carefully assesses applications and will either classify the material as safe for reuse, with specific conditions, or require it to be treated or disposed of at a licensed facility

PFAS in Victoria

- EPA regulates the disposal, reuse and management of PFAS affected materials.
- There are low levels of PFAS in the environment. Some sites have higher levels based on their previous use.
- EPA takes a precautionary approach and recommends reducing exposure to PFAS.
- EPA carefully assesses applications for reuse, drawing on strong scientific analysis.

Looking for more information?

Visit epa.vic.gov.au to read more

Contact EPA on
1300 372 842
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