

EPA tightens advisory guidelines for PFOS; Issaquah's treatment system nears completion

By Scott Stoddard Jun 6, 2016



Scott Stoddard / sstoddard@isspress.com

The two-tank treatment system to remove perfluorinated chemicals from water is being installed adjacent to the pumphouse for Gilman Wells No. 4 and No. 5.

The Environmental Protection Agency's advisory level for the contaminant that has been detected in Issaquah's Gilman Well No. 4 has been significantly tightened.

The federal agency in May issued a new "lifetime advisory level" for perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, dropping its previous 0.2 parts per billion provisional advisory level to 0.07 parts per billion combined for both PFOS and another perfluorinated chemical, perfluorooctanoic acid, known more commonly as PFOA.

The agency said it "develops health advisories to provide information on contaminants that can cause human health effects and are known or anticipated to occur in drinking water. EPA's health advisories are nonenforceable and nonregulatory and provide technical information to

state agencies and other public health officials on health effects, analytical methodologies and treatment technologies associated with drinking water contamination.”

In November 2015, the city reported a maximum PFOS detection of 0.106 parts per billion in tap water, a reading that exceeds the new EPA benchmark by more than 30 percent. The well plagued with PFOS was taken offline in March, and a new water treatment system leased by the City of Issaquah to eradicate perfluorinated chemicals is scheduled to begin operating later this month.

The city signed a three-year contract with TIGG LLC of Oakdale, Pa., for a two-tank system that will use coconut-based granular activated carbon to remove PFOS from Gilman Well No. 4, which has been contaminated with the chemical for an undetermined amount of time. The contract covers both the equipment and resupply of the carbon media.

The City Council authorized expenditures totaling \$1.13 million in March and April for the treatment system and additional research into the source of the PFOS contamination, which has not been identified.

Water from Well No. 4 has historically been blended with water from at least one other well before it reaches the tap of Issaquah water customers.

The EPA says exposure to PFOS over certain levels may result in adverse health effects, including developmental effects to fetuses during pregnancy or to breast-fed infants.

Scott Stoddard Scott Stoddard is the editor of The Issaquah Press family of newspapers.