



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and 3M have entered into an Administrative Order on Consent (“Consent Order”) pertaining to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, otherwise known as PFAS. This Consent Order impacts the City of Camanche and its residents in the following manner.

The City began testing for PFAS in January of 2022. At that time, EPA set a public health advisory level for PFAS in the city’s water system at 70 parts per trillion (PPT). The City’s readings were in the general range of 20 PPT for combined PFOA and PFOS. Since that time, due to evolving understanding of the potential impacts to the environment and human health, the EPA has issued an updated health advisory for levels of PFOA over .004 PPT and PFOS over 0.02 PPT.

The Consent Agreement between the EPA and 3M requires that 3M offer testing and treatment with granulated activated carbon (GAC) filters for all private water supply wells within a 3 mile radius of the Cordova, IL manufacturing plant. 3M must also offer testing of private wells within a 4 mile radius of the 3M Plant.

The Consent Order also requires 3M to complete work to mitigate the PFAS levels in the City of Camanche water supply. As a part of the compliance with this Consent Order, 3M is required to assist, at its own expense, the City of Camanche with upgrades to its drinking water system to reduce and eliminate detectable PFAS from the City’s drinking water supply.

Currently, the City draws a majority of its water from two shallow wells. The City also operates a deep well as a backup supply. The testing at each of these wells has shown that the shallow wells contain detectable levels of PFAS contamination, while the deep well does not show any detectable PFAS contamination.

The City of Camanche continues to cooperate with 3M as it works to satisfy its obligations under the Consent Order, which will ultimately require providing a water supply to the users in Camanche that no longer contains PFAS. To achieve this goal, efforts are underway to service the current deep well in order to have that be used as the primary water supply in Camanche. In order to maintain a reliable, multi-point water supply, additional work is planned to have two new deep wells drilled in order to replace the two shallow wells that currently show detectable PFAS.

This process will be time consuming. However, we want to assure our users that we are working towards a resolution as efficiently and safely as possible. As noted, the EPA has issued a lifetime drinking water health advisory for four PFAS chemicals including PFOS and PFOA. Drinking water health advisories provide information on contaminants that can cause health effects and are known or anticipated to occur in drinking water. EPA health advisories are non-regulatory at the federal level and reflect EPA’s assessment of the best available peer reviewed science. We recommend you review the information from the EPA and the National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine (NAS) concerning PFAS. You can find links to that information on our City’s web page at www.camancheia.org.

Ultimately, we recommend you follow the NAS guidelines and consult with your personal physician concerning your consumption of water, which may contain PFAS.

Scientists and regulators are still evaluating, researching, and considering what drinking water standards for PFAS to enact. GAC filters are readily available for in home residential use. You might consider using or installing one as an extra measure of protection while remediation is in process. According to the current scientific consensus, households with pregnant women, children, elderly or immunocompromised individuals might especially benefit from interim use of a GAC filter.

You are also reminded, under current City Ordinance 6-3-26, sand point wells are for irrigation only. Domestic use of sand point wells is prohibited where the city water supply is within 200 feet. There are very few exceptions to this Ordinance, which were existing prior to the passage of the connection requirement. It is also required that these sand point wells be separated from the City supply. Co-mingling sand point connections with city supplied water lines is illegal under City Ordinance 6-3-26.

The City recently conducted PFAS tests on 3 external sand point wells at various locations where the city supply was the primary water use. Those tests revealed similar PFAS results as compared to the City supplied water. If you are not connected to City water, you will receive information from 3M to have your well tested for PFAS. The U.S. EPA is currently reviewing a plan for the testing of private drinking water wells in the area between 3 and 4 miles from the Cordova Plant. Approval of the plan is expected soon. When the plan is approved, letters will be sent to well owners and/or locations using the private drinking water wells that are within the target area. That letter will provide some general background information, explain how to accept the testing, and provide a phone number for people to call with questions about the testing. The City has provided contact information for individuals in the city limits who are not on City supplied water to 3M. If you receive information from 3M asking you to contact them about testing your well, we highly recommend that you take them up on that request.

Finally, the PFAS issue is not the same as our recent discolored water issue. The discoloration comes from our internal infrastructure controls which is to be replaced soon. We continue to experience delays in materials to complete this work. We will be completing this work as soon as possible. PFAS is an invisible chemical. The discolored water situation is due to electronic control malfunctioning.

Our expected timeframe for full correction of the PFAS issue is the end of 2024. This timeframe is based on the approval by the EPA of a plan set forth by the City of Camanche and 3M. The projected timeframe for the current deep well to be at full operation such that it can serve as the main supply of water to the City is May of 2023. The City will continue to strive towards remediating the water system issues in order to provide water that meets all Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and EPA standards or advisories and arrive at that point as swiftly as possible.

If you have questions or concerns about the contents of this letter, please contact Gaylon Pewe, Camanche Public Works Director (pwd@camancheia.org), or Andrew Kida, City Administrator (akida@camancheia.org). Either can be reached by phone by calling City Hall at 563-259-8342.