



## May 2024 Newsletter

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M to F 8AM – 2PM

- **What are PFAS? How can I be affected and what can we do? *See Below***
- **Do I have lead in my plumbing? Lead and Copper Rule Revisions: Why are MAWSA people “digging up our curbs?” *See Page 2***
- **How can I better monitor my water usage? *See Page 2***

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### ***What are PFAS? (often called “Forever Chemicals”)***

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PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) is an acronym for a group of thousands of chemicals used to produce many of the everyday products we use and enjoy such as anti-stain fabrics, heat resistant products, cell phone cases, water repellent, and fire suppressant products and devices. Some of these are linked to harmful effects on humans and as there are literally thousands of these chemicals, research has been difficult. They are often referred to as “forever chemicals” as they do not breakdown and decompose quickly under normal conditions for extremely long periods of time and if not properly disposed of, they can make their way into our water supply.

To tackle this public concern, in January of last year Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) established maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) and maximum contaminant level goals (MCLGs) for two of the more common PFAS (PFOA and PFOS). Beginning in 2024, public water systems like MAWSA are required to test quarterly for these two PFAS. Shortly thereafter, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enacted a five-year plan to monitor, test, report, and ultimately remediate PFAS nationwide. The MCLs released for the two PFAS that the EPA is targeting is a more aggressive goal.

MAWSA completed our first two rounds of testing for 2024. While our results showed quantities of PFAS well below the State guidelines, the quantities were higher than the Federal parameters announced in April. MAWSA will continue to monitor, report, educate, and ultimately remediate issues as more is learned to ensure public health and safety and ensure compliance with both State and Federal mandates.

Please visit <https://mawsa.org> to learn more or to see updates on the topic as they are available.

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### **Dates to Know**

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**2024 Chiques Creek Watershed Expo** held Wednesday June 12, 2024 at the Manheim Farm Show Complex off of Adele Avenue in Manheim. Free admission, free ice cream, and many activities for the entire family.

## Do I have lead in my plumbing?

The Lead and Copper Rule has been in effect since 1991, put in place by the Environmental Protection Agency. After undergoing revisions throughout the years, new requirements will be enforced on public water suppliers, including MAWSA, beginning in October 2024. Among the revisions, all public water companies must maintain an inventory of all materials carrying drinking water – mains, service lines, and to the connection within each building. In addition to our ongoing regular sampling for lead and copper, our team has been reviewing historical records, sampling underground locations through small excavations, and surveying internal property connections (this was completed as part of the MAWSA Meter Replacement project). You may have seen MAWSA crews excavating or marking water service lines in neighborhoods to confirm connection materials on either side of the curb stop – the traditional boundary between MAWSA ownership and the property owner. This will continue throughout the summer and into the fall to identify materials where there are not adequate records, particularly with older properties.

As this work progresses, we will continue to provide information on this Rule Revision and the overall project via newsletter, our website MAWSA.org, email notification campaigns, or on your monthly billing statement in the box labeled “Messages.”

## How can I better monitor my water usage?

Some of our customers are already reaping the benefits of the new water metering system by early detection of water leaks. The new technology and the underlying systems provide visibility at a level not seen in this area before. Many communities have quarterly billings or manual reads that allow even small homeowner leaks to go undetected for long periods of time, resulting in much higher bills than normally expected. MAWSA has monthly billing, and even with our old daily read system, it was difficult to pinpoint possible causes of high usage. The current technology provides reads every hour which allows for us to provide greater insight to customers, and much earlier, so that any issues can be addressed.

Case Study Example: See graph below showing high, continuous, usage starting over a weekend. We were able to notify the customer promptly on Monday AM while they were on vacation 1,000 miles away. This customer was able to notify someone nearby, who was then able to quickly determine a “running toilet.” Without notification, the customer may not have discovered the issue until sometime after their return.



This is one of many cases over the past few months. Due to the positive feedback, MAWSA has invested in a software package that will provide customers with real-time notification of abnormal water use that can be tailored to the customer’s preference (i.e. SMS text, email, etc.). This is part of the Meter Replacement project funded in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of PA, Commonwealth Financing Authority. We are implementing this software package now, and will look to roll this out within the next few months. Please keep an eye out for additional information on this service referred to as “AquaHawk.”