

Village of Sparta Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Information Sheet

1. Why did the Village decide to test the wells?

Answer: In response to citizen concern and recent events in which some water supplies in Kent County showed the presence of PFAS.

2. Were all the Village wells tested?

Answer: Yes

3. When were the tests completed?

Answer: Test #1 took samples from Well #2, Well #4 & Well #5. Well #3 was not tested because of the close proximity to Well #2. The samples were taken on December 7, 2017 and the results were received on December 22, 2017. At that time Well #2 tested 2.2 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFBS. Once the results were received the Village ordered a re-test of Well #2, a test of Well #3 and a combined test following treatment of Well #2 and #5 together. The Village received those results on January 11, 2018.

The second test results indicated that well #2 re-tested at 3.3 ppt and well #3 had a no-detect. Well #2 & Well #5 together post treatment at the water plant tested at 2.0 ppt for PFBS.

4. Who handled the testing?

Answer: Fleis & VandenBrink a Grand Rapids based engineering firm handled the sampling and the results were analyzed by Pace Analytical Services in Minneapolis, MN. Village staff does not have the training necessary to perform this type of sampling or testing.

5. Where were the well samples taken?

Answer: All well samples were taken from an aerator-free spigot in the well house. The Well #2 & Well #5 combined post treatment sample was taken post treatment in the water plant.

6. What was found?

Answer: Perfluorobutane sulfonate (PFBS).

7. What is PFBS?

Answer: Perfluorobutane sulfonate (PFBS) is one of a group of related chemicals known as perfluorochemicals (PFC's). These are also called perfluorinated alkylated substances (PFAS). This group of chemicals is commonly used in non-stick and stain-resistant consumer products, food packaging, fire-fighting foam, and industrial processes.

8. Why didn't the Village test for this set of chemicals sooner?

Answer: The Village of Sparta is not required to test for this group of chemicals as part of our Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) testing requirements. The MDEQ is the regulatory agency that regulates the testing required for the Sparta Water system.

9. Is well #2 still in operation?

Answer: No, the Village has taken it offline from operation when it tested positive for PFBS.

10. Was the Village required to take well #2 out of operation?

Answer: No, the DEQ does not have a regulatory limit for PFBS. The Village decided to remove it from operation until the DEQ has set a standard for regulatory purposes and we understand the issue more.

11. How much PFBS is safe?

Answer: The Village is waiting to receive guidance from the MDEQ on this. There is currently no standard set by the MDEQ. The Minnesota Department of Health has issued a guidance value of 2 parts per billion (ppb) for PFBS in drinking water. The Village of Sparta sampling was done in parts per trillion (ppt). Based on the Minnesota guidance on what they have indicated is a safe level, it would be 2,000 ppt. The Village sample for Well #2 was 3.3 ppt.

12. If I live by a well, does that mean that is where my water comes from?

Answer: No, the wells feed into the water plant through underground pipes and the water is spread throughout the system. The Village of Sparta operates four (4) municipal wells. Well #2, Well #3, Well #4 and Well #5. The Village runs Well #3 & Well #5 together and Well #2 & Well #5 together and runs Well #4 alone. This is based on capacity and switching between aquifers so the Village doesn't run into capacity issues.

13. Where did the PFBS come from?

Answer: We do not know. The Village will be working with the MDEQ and the Kent County Health Department to try and learn as much as we can about potential sources and try to understand how this chemical got into Well #2.

14. Will the Village continue to test for PFBS in the other wells?

Answer: The Village will continue to test for PFBS in all wells on a quarterly basis until we understand more about how the chemical moves and the MDEQ provides additional guidance.

15. Where are the wells located?

Answer: A map has been uploaded to the PFBS page to show all the well locations.

16. Why is there no well #1?

Answer: Well #1 was in operation when the water plant was located at 146 Averill St., near the current Skate Park on E. Gardner St. The well was abandoned in 1977 around the time the Water Plant was moved to 383 S. State Street.

17. What does a non-detect test result mean?

Answer: The testing threshold is 2.0 parts per trillion (ppt). Anything below 2.0 ppt is considered to be a non-detect.

18. I have a private well, should I get my well tested?

Answer: That is a decision that needs to be made by each individual property owner. The Village will be working with the Kent County Health Department to try and identify companies that can perform the testing on a private well. Once that information has been received we can share it on the PFBS information page.

If you have any questions please feel free to Julius Suchy, Village Manager at (616) 887-8251 or via e-mail jsuchy@spartami.org.