

Questions & Answers:

Proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Perchlorate

January 2026

What is perchlorate?

Perchlorate is a chemical compound that occurs naturally and can also be manmade. It is commonly used in solid rocket propellants, munitions, fireworks, airbag initiators, matches, and signal flares. Perchlorate has also been found in fertilizers and as a byproduct of improper handling of hypochlorite solutions used for drinking water treatment. Perchlorate exposure occurs mainly through ingesting contaminated food and drinking water. You can also be exposed through tobacco products, household products such as bleach, dietary supplements, signal flares and fireworks, and contaminated dust at perchlorate production facilities. The EPA anticipates that very few regulated water systems—approximately one tenth of one percent—are likely to find perchlorate in drinking water above either the proposed enforceable limits or the MCLG.

What are the health effects of perchlorate?

Perchlorate interferes with the normal functioning of a person's thyroid gland by reducing iodide uptake, which can affect thyroid hormone production. Thyroid hormones help keep the metabolism working properly and are critical for growth and development, including brain development. Changes in thyroid hormone levels in pregnant women can have harmful effects on brain development in their children. Additionally, changes in thyroid hormone levels at other life stages can lead to hypothyroidism, harmful reproductive and developmental effects, and impacts to the cardiovascular system.

Based on the available science, a population at increased risk to health impacts on brain development from perchlorate exposure is children of hypothyroxinemic pregnant women with low iodine intake exposed during pregnancy to perchlorate levels above the proposed Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG). Young children may also be at increased risk. Hypothyroxinemia is a condition characterized by normal thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) levels and thyroid hormone (free thyroxine [fT4]) levels below the normal range. If you are concerned about your iodine intake and thyroid hormone levels during pregnancy, talk to your doctor.

How will I know if perchlorate is in my drinking water?

Contact your water utility to find out your water system's perchlorate levels. If you are concerned about perchlorate in your water, consider taking steps to reduce your exposure. Learn more about [perchlorate in drinking water](#) and what you can do.

What can I do to reduce my risk of exposure to perchlorate in drinking water?

Contact your water utility to find out your water system's perchlorate levels, what actions the water system is taking to reduce perchlorate levels, and any steps you can take to reduce your exposure to perchlorate in drinking water. If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant and concerned about your risk factors, talk to your doctor.

Why is the EPA proposing this rule?

The EPA is proposing a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for perchlorate and Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) as a result of the D.C. Circuit's May 2023 decision in *NRDC v. Regan*, 67 F.4th 397 (D.C. Cir. 2023). The EPA is required per a consent decree to sign a proposed NPDWR and MCLG for perchlorate by January 2, 2026 and to sign a final rule by May 21, 2027.

What is the EPA proposing?

The EPA is proposing for public comment an NPDWR for perchlorate and a health-based MCLG as a result of the D.C. Circuit's May 2023 decision in *NRDC v. Regan*. The EPA is proposing to set the MCLG at 0.02 mg/L (20 µg/L). The EPA is also proposing and taking comment on setting an enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for perchlorate at 0.02 mg/L (20 µg/L), 0.04 mg/L (40 µg/L), or 0.08 mg/L (80 µg/L). For the small number of systems that find perchlorate above the MCL, the EPA is also proposing requirements for water systems to monitor for perchlorate in drinking water, mitigate perchlorate, provide information about perchlorate to their consumers, and report to their respective primacy agency. The EPA's proposed regulation could require over 66,000 systems in the United States to test and monitor for the presence of perchlorate, even though it's unlikely to be found.

What is a proposed rule?

Before the EPA finalizes a drinking water regulation, it publishes a proposed rule to get feedback that the Agency will consider when developing a final rule. The EPA is sharing the proposed rule with the public to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders – from drinking water consumers to water systems to public health professionals – to share their feedback. You can share your input on the proposal by submitting a comment through the public docket, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2024-0592, at www.regulations.gov.

How do I provide comment on the proposed perchlorate rule?

The EPA welcomes public input as part of the regulatory development process. You can review the proposed perchlorate rule and supporting information and provide written comments at www.regulations.gov, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2024-0592. Follow the online instructions for submitting written comments. Comments must be submitted to the public docket during the 60-day public comment period. The EPA will consider all public comments in informing the development of the final regulation. For more information and instructions on how to submit written comments to the public docket, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/dockets/commenting-epa-dockets>. The EPA will also hold a virtual public hearing on February 19, 2026 from 1 pm to 4 pm EST at which the public will be invited to provide the EPA with verbal comments. For more information on the public hearing and how to provide the EPA with verbal and written comments, visit <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/perchlorate-drinking-water>.

Disclaimer: This document is being provided for informational purposes only to assist members of the public, States, Tribes, and/or public water systems in reviewing and commenting on the package for the proposed perchlorate National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR). In the event that there are any differences, conflicts, or errors between this document and the content included in the package for the proposed perchlorate NPDWR, including the preamble and proposed regulatory text, States, Tribes, and/or public water systems should refer to the rule package. The NPDWR is only a proposed rule and the content discussed herein about the proposed perchlorate NPDWR is subject to change before a final perchlorate NPDWR is promulgated. This document does not impose any new legally binding requirements on the EPA, States, Tribes, or the regulated community. Further, this document does not confer legal rights or impose legal obligations on any member of the public. In the event of a conflict between the discussion in this fact sheet and any statute or promulgated regulation, the statute and any promulgated regulations are controlling.