



Olympic View Water and Sewer District Citizen Suit to Stop PFAS Pollution at the Madrona School

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Olympic View Water and Sewer District (OVWSD) is taking action to protect the quality of the public's drinking water from unsafe levels of toxic PFAS chemicals that have been detected in soil and stormwater at the Madrona School site, posing a threat to our community's water supply. After extensive efforts to collaborate with the Edmonds School District were ignored, we had to resort to legal action to ensure the safety of the public's water.

While the ESD engaged with OVWSD in discussions regarding this problem after receiving the Notice of Intent to Sue letter from OVWSD, the parties have not agreed yet on how to eliminate the risk of PFAS to the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer. OVWSD remains committed to working with the ESD to stop the immediate discharge of PFAS contaminated stormwater until a solution to the problem is achieved.

This FAQ document provides critical information on PFAS contamination at Madrona School, the steps we are taking, and how you can stay informed.

Where does my drinking water come from?

- Your drinking water comes from two primary sources. Approximately 60% is supplied by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) from the South Fork Tolt River Watershed and the Cedar River Watershed. Both are protected and remote areas in the Cascade Mountains. These watersheds are strictly managed by SPU, which enforces robust protection measures, prohibiting agricultural, industrial, or recreational activities. The remaining water comes from Deer Creek, a stream fed by the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer, which has served the community for over a century. Madrona School's stormwater wells drain into the ground above the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer.

Is my drinking water currently safe?

- Yes, OVWSD's treated drinking water remains safe. Our treated drinking water is routinely monitored, adhering to strict federal and state regulations. Recent testing of approximately 200 compounds in your water showed no contaminants exceeding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) allowable limits. Our concern with PFAS at the Madrona School is

about protecting the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer which supplies OVWSD's treated drinking water.

What are PFAS, and why are they a concern?

- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals used since the 1950s in various consumer products like food packaging, non-stick cookware, and water-resistant fabrics. They are also found in certain firefighting foams. PFAS are known to persist in the environment and have been linked to significant health risks, including developmental issues, immune system effects, and an increased risk of certain cancers.

What is the PFAS issue at Madrona School?

- In 2022, OVWSD detected unsafe PFAS levels in stormwater samples from the Madrona School site. Follow-up testing by the Edmonds School District in 2023 and 2024 continued to show elevated PFAS concentrations in soil and stormwater. Direction from the Washington Department of Ecology in 2024 to investigate the source of the PFAS contamination have resulted in insufficient action by the school and has left the problem unresolved.
- In 2024, soil samples from Madrona School's bioretention planters—areas designed to manage stormwater—revealed unsafe PFAS concentrations. The Washington Department of Ecology has since requested corrective action, recommending soil removal, further sampling, and "first flush" monitoring in fall 2025.

Could PFAS from Madrona School contaminate my drinking water?

- Your drinking water is currently safe. However, the PFAS contamination at Madrona School poses a threat to the quality of OVWSD's water supply, prompting this action to safeguard your water.

Why is OVWSD Water and Sewer District filing a Citizen Suit?

- Despite being aware of the PFAS contamination since 2023, the Edmonds School District has failed to take effective action to prevent PFAS from entering the school's underground injection control (UIC) wells. OVWSD's repeated efforts to resolve the issue through direct discussions went unanswered for years, leaving legal action as the only alternative.

What is a Citizen Suit?

- A Citizen Suit is a legal mechanism that allows individuals or entities to sue for the enforcement of environmental laws, when corporations and government bodies fail to comply.

Is there a solution to the PFAS problem at Madrona School?

- Yes. OVWSD has developed two permanent alternative stormwater designs and one emergency bypass option that can be used to stop PFAS discharge during the Edmonds School District's investigation into the source of PFAS and/or while one of the permanent alternatives is under construction. These were provided to the Washington Department of

Ecology with the expectation that the agency was going to pass them on to the Edmonds School District because OVWSD was not allowed to participate in the meetings with the Edmonds School District and the Department of Ecology.

What are the next steps?

- After the Notice of Intent to Sue Letter, the Edmonds School District had 60 days to come into compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act as implemented through Washington’s Underground Injection Control program. Based upon the information reviewed to date, the OVWSD has a good faith belief that the Edmonds School District continues to violate the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- In an attempt to avoid litigation, OVWSD’s Notice of Intent to Sue letter again requested a meeting with the Edmonds School District. While prior attempts to meet with the Edmonds School District were unsuccessful, the Edmonds School District did meet with OVWSD in response to the OVWSD’s Notice Letter. That meeting did not resolve the issues, but OVWSD remains committed to working with the Edmonds School District to achieve a solution to the problem while the lawsuit proceeds.

Where can I learn more about PFAS?

- To Learn more, visit the Washington Department of Health PFAS page:
[PFAS | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- To learn what OVSWD is doing to safeguard your drinking water from PFAS visit:
www.olympicviewwater.com/info-and-resources/pfas-information/