

## Quarterly Community Update

### RECENT HAPPENINGS

#### The Board met in April and June.

In April ([watch the recording](#)), highlights included:

- Updates on various rulemaking work, including Notifiable Conditions, Newborn Screening, Auditory Screening, and School Environmental Health and Safety.
- Read the [meeting recap](#) for more information.

In June, ([watch the recording](#)), highlights included

- Updates on the Department of Health's ongoing [Fluoride Science Review](#).
- A presentation from [Grays Harbor County Public Health](#).
- Rules hearings on [Auditory Screenings](#) and [Environmental Health and Safety Standards for schools](#).



### Upcoming Meetings

#### Board of Health:

August 20  
October 8

#### Health Promotion Committee:

September 4

#### Environmental Health Committee:

September 11

### OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED

#### Upcoming Meeting: August 20, 2025

##### Physical meeting location:

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (Auditorium),  
7273 Linderson Way SW Tumwater, WA 98501-5414

**Zoom** information is posted on our [website](#) two weeks prior.

##### Participation in Our Work:

The Board continues to work on Newborn Screening, Auditory Screening, Water Recreation, and other topics. If you would like to meet with staff to share your experiences with how these topics impact the health of your community, please contact [Hannah](#).

[Email the Board](#) anytime with public comments on any of our work or issues that matter to you.

### BOARD OPENINGS

[Apply to serve](#) as a Board Member for one of three openings: someone with experience in health and sanitation, someone who is a local health officer, or someone who is a city official serving on a local board of health. These positions are appointed by the Governor for a three year term, with the possibility of reappointment. Please contact [Hannah Haag](#), Board Community Outreach Coordinator for questions, more details, or support in the application process.

## PER-AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

The State Board of Health (Board) is working with the Department of Health (Department) to develop rules on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These chemicals are used to make products like cookware, food packaging, fabrics, and dental floss nonstick and resistant to water, stains, and heat. Certain firefighting foams also contain PFAS. [1]

Researchers have linked PFAS to health problems such as cancer, thyroid disease, and high cholesterol. They don't break down naturally but can be removed. PFAS have been found in about 20% of Washington's public water systems. [2]

Group A water systems must test for PFAS by December 31, 2025, and then every three years. If levels exceed the state action level (SAL), the system must notify customers within 30 days and test quarterly until levels fall below the SAL. Washington's current SALs are:

- Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA): 10 nanograms per liter (ng/L)
- Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS): 15 (ng/L)
- Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS): 65 (ng/L)
- Perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA): 9 (ng/L)
- Perfluorobutanesulfonic acid (PFBS): 345 (ng/L)

In 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency adopted federal Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) that are stricter than Washington's SALs, except for PFNA. These MCLs take effect in 2029. In March 2025, the Board authorized the Department to adopt these federal standards. Once adopted, Washington's MCLs will be:

- PFOA: 4 (ng/L)
- PFOS: 4 (ng/L)
- PFHxS: 10 (ng/L)
- PFNA: 10 (ng/L)
- PFBS: 10 (ng/L)
- Mixtures of PFAS: 1 part, regardless of unit of measurement

Although the federal rule isn't enforceable until 2029, current state rules make the MCLs override the SALs once adopted. To address this gap, the Board adopted emergency rules to keep the SALs in place until federal enforcement begins.

The Board is also working with the Department to make these temporary rules permanent and strengthen reporting requirements by aligning SALs with MCLs

To keep up with the Board's PFAS rules, email [drinkingwater@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:drinkingwater@sboh.wa.gov) to join our interested parties list, or visit our webpage [Group A Public Water Supplies - PFAS - Current Rulemakings](#)



[1] See [Best Management Practices for Deep Cleaning Fire Equipment Contaminated with PFAS-Containing Firefighting Foam in Washington State](#)

[2] PFAS | Washington State Department of Health

## SCHOOL RULE REVIEW PROJECT

In May of 2024, [the Legislature directed](#) the Board to propose a new school environmental health and safety rule. The current rule is over 50 years old and affects almost 1.1 million K-12 students in Washington State. The Project team developed a [Technical Advisory Committee](#) (TAC) to review the rules. The TAC was a multi-disciplinary committee with members from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Department of Health (Department), small and large school districts, and the Washington associations of school administrators. It also included school directors, maintenance and operations administrators, school business officials, representatives from private schools, the Washington Parent Teacher Student Association, and other community-based organizations.

From August 2024 until May 2025, the TAC met 17 times throughout the state, reviewing the existing rules and proposing new standards for Washington schools. The School Rule Review Project team also provided outreach and listening sessions to Washington State communities and Tribes, holding 11 sessions online and throughout the state from July 2024 to April 2025, with 228 community participants. The TAC finalized language, prioritized topics, and reviewed the public comments for the proposed rule [chapter 246-370 WAC](#).

The new rule provides updated definitions, site assessment protocols, construction plan review for new or altered facilities, routine health inspections every three years, and direction for emergency hazards and variances. There are requirements for indoor air quality, indoor temperature limits, and specialized rooms, including health rooms. The rule is designed to allow for flexibility while maintaining accountability, including a phased implementation. The phased implementation focuses on key safety measures while also allowing schools time to ramp up for more expensive provisions.

The new rule was presented to the Board on April 9, 2025, with the Board accepting the TAC's recommendations. The Board will work with OSPI, the Department, the TAC and local health jurisdictions to provide a report on the rule to the Office of the Governor and appropriate committees by June 30, 2025.



The report will include recommendations for implementation, including interim recommendations to amend and repeal portions of chapters 246-366 and 246-366A WAC. A detailed [fiscal analysis](#) (page 66) has been drafted, along with an [Environmental Justice Assessment](#) (page 43). The Department will develop templates and guidance documents to help schools implement the new requirements and best practices.

We would like to extend our gratitude to our technical advisory committee and the School Rules Project staff. For more information on this topic, please see our [school rule webpage](#), or contact the Board at [wsboh@sboh.wa.gov](mailto:wsboh@sboh.wa.gov).