On February 14th of 2019, EPA held a press conference to announce the first ever comprehensive nationwide Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Action Plan. This action plan would go on to address two of the most common PFAS chemicals; PFOA and PFOS. Despite having called this press conference, no definitive regulations were set in place which led to some frustrated states that have decided to move on without them. We believe an awareness of this issue – what is it, why is it important – will prove to be highly beneficial.

**SO WHAT ARE PFAS?**  
 Simply put, per- and polyfluoroalkyl Substances are a class of man-made chemicals that are widely used in the industrial process and can be found in consumer. They are split into two groups: Polymers and Non-polymers. To be a bit more specific, PFAS are chains of carbon atoms that are surrounded by fluorine atoms. The chemistry is very complex, which is what allows for there to be thousands upon thousands of variations existing in commerce today.

**WHERE CAN PFAS BE FOUND?**

It would almost be easier to say where they aren’t found! PFAS can be found anywhere; in pizza boxes, cookware, paints, polishes, electronics manufacturing, fuel additive, and more! There are even cases of the direct release of PFAS products into the environment. The use if aqueous film forming foam in emergency response, chrome surfacing facilities, landfills, and wastewater treatment all contribute to the release of PFAS in the environment.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

Some PFAS are known to be persistent in the environment, bioaccumulative in organisms, and toxic at relatively low levels. The fact that PFAS come in so many shapes and sizes in so many industries and consumer products means that an alarmingly high percentage of people have been exposed to PFAS. Contaminated drinking water is the best documented source of known human exposure pathways, but food, house dust, and workplace exposure are amongst the top as well. In communities with contaminated drinking water, human health effects include higher cholesterol, increased uric acid, lower birth weight, lower response to vaccines, diabetes, cancer, and more.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT EPA’S PFAS DATA AND TOOLS WEBSITE AT** <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/epa-pfas-data-and-tools>