An Roinn Aeráide,
Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate,
Energy and the Environment

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

David Dodd
Environment Climate Research Advisory Unit (ECRAU)
15th October 2025

ESTG
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
2025
15TH OF OCTOBER
PEACE CAMPUS MONAGHAN

Contents

- What are POPs ?
- History of Action on POPs
- POPs Legislation and governance – Global to National
- Roles of Public Authorities and National Implementation Plan (NIP)
- Examples of POPs Monitoring and case studies
- Further sources of information

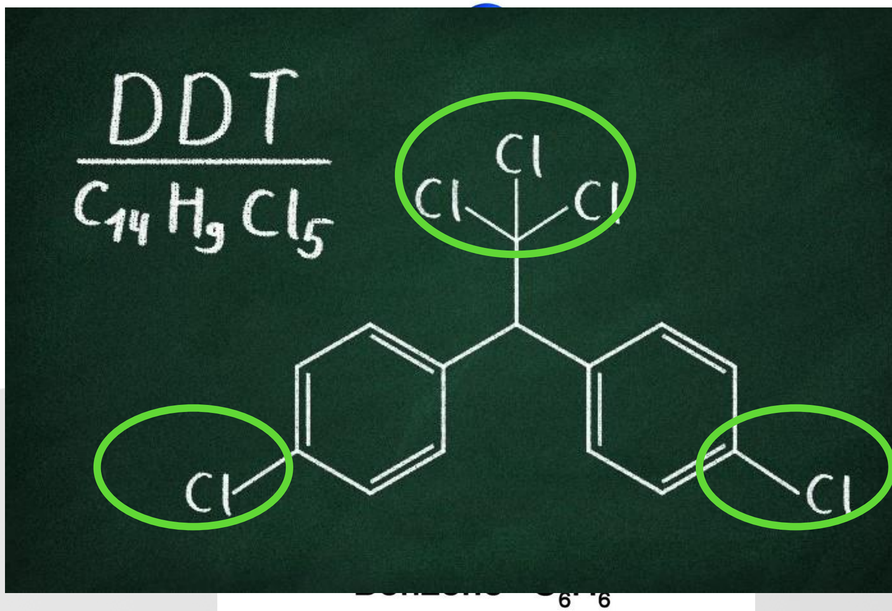
Chunky Choc 40p
Cornetto
Choc'n'Nut Cornetto 45p
Tongue Twister 24p
Mint Choc 30p
MAXI TWIST
Maxi Twist 35p
Iceberger 30p
Jumbo 50p
HB
Vanilla Cone 30p
NEW
Fat Frog 14p
Shuttle 30p
CALIPPO
NEW
Calippo 35p
Funny Feet 22p
Choc Ice 25p
Vanilla Tub 25p
NEW
Feast 25p
NEW
Paddle Pop 15p
Wibbly Wobbly Wonder 20p
That-a-way 15p
Golly Bar 20p
Orange Super Split 18p
Strawberry Super Split 18p
Pop Hit 14p
Loop the Loop 16p
Chilly Willy's (4 flavours) 16p

Chemistry Recap !

Organic compounds are chemical compounds primarily made of **carbon** atoms, often bonded to **hydrogen**, oxygen, nitrogen, and other elements, and are essential for life.

With **POPs** many compounds have a variety of Carbon – **Chlorine**, Carbon - **Fluorine** and or Carbon- **Bromine** Bonds

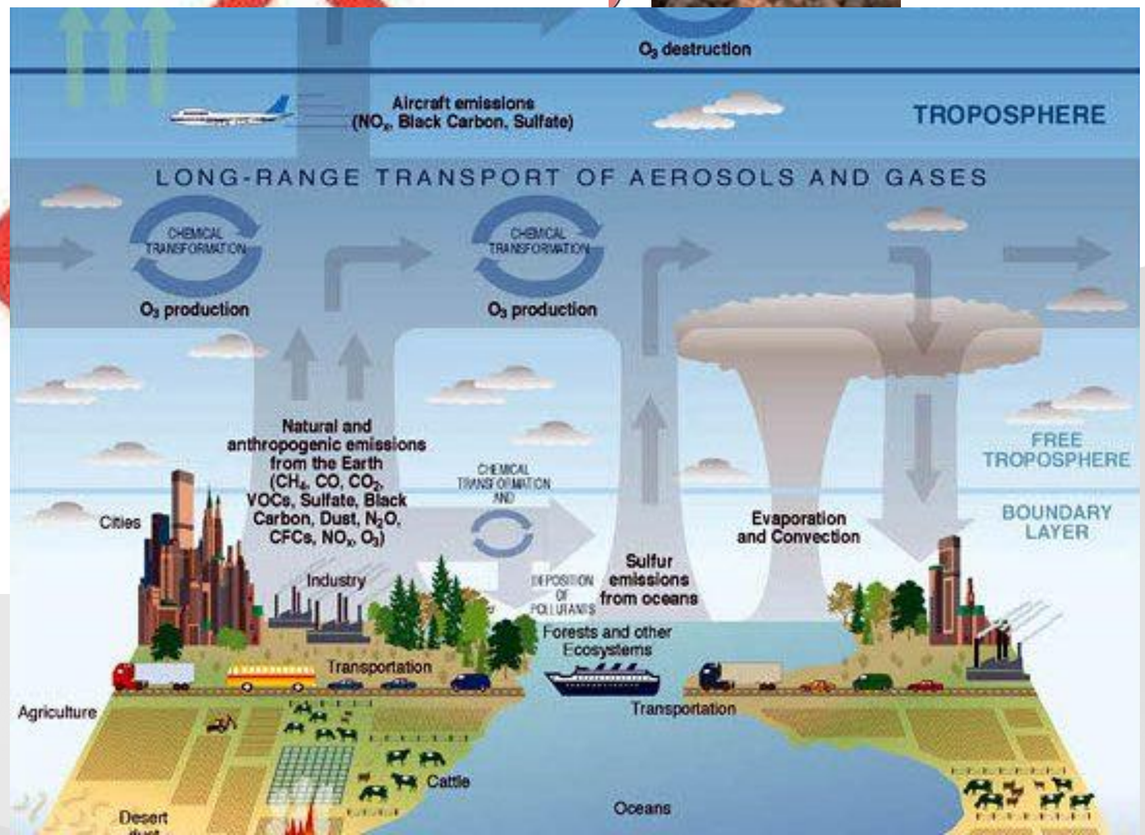
These chemical bonds in particular **C-F**, are extremely strong chemical bonds and resistant to biodegradation in the environment.



What makes a POP a POP? Criteria for POPs

For a substance to be classified (under the Stockholm Convention) as a POP, it must undergo a scientific assessment to determine that its;

- **Persistence**
- **Bioaccumulation**
- **Toxicity**
- **Long-range environmenta**

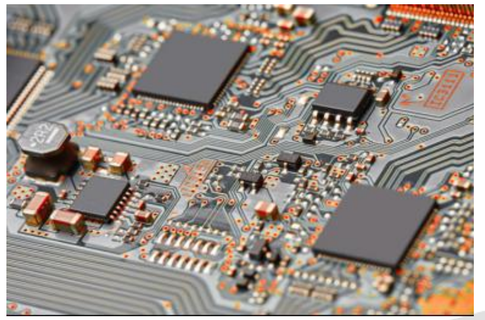


What are main categories of POPs?

Chemical substances that have been identified as POPs include:

- **Pesticides** (such as DDT);
- **Industrial chemicals** (such as polychlorinated biphenyls PCBs, which were widely used in electrical equipment); or
- **Unintentional by-products** formed during industrial processes, degradation or combustion (such as dioxins and furans)







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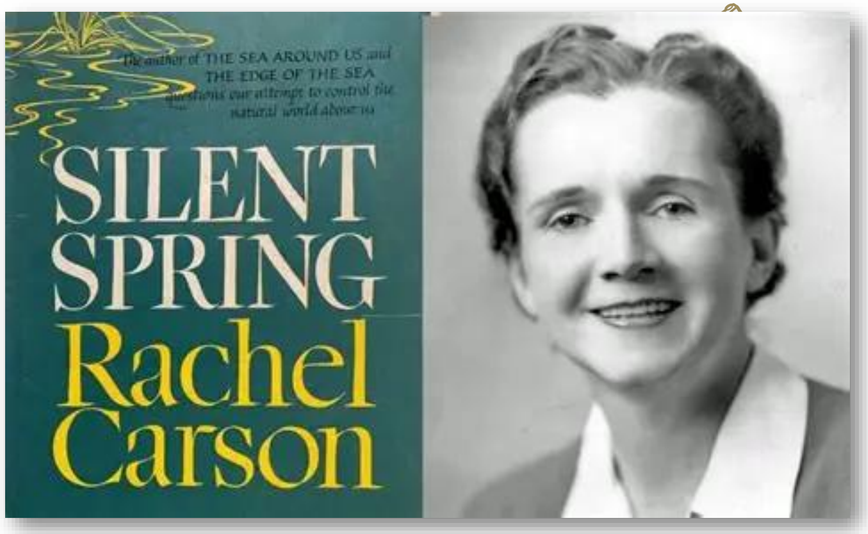
Brief History of Action on POPs



- **1962** – Silent Spring by Rachel Carson
- **1970s and 80s** – some countries start to take action
- **1990s** – work begins on international POPs fora
- **1997** - UNEP decision to establish International Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop a global POPs treaty
- **2001** – Conference on Stockholm Convention

Overview of the Stockholm Convention

- Adopted in May 2001
- Entered into force **May 2004**
- Currently **186 Parties** and **152 signatories** (including Ireland and EU)

Objective Article 1 – “To protect Human health and environment from persistent organic pollutants”

Annex A – Elimination
Annex B – Restriction
Annex C – Unintentional Production

(Source: Stockholm Convention - Home page)

Overview of the Stockholm Convention

- First POPs included “**the Dirty Dozen**”

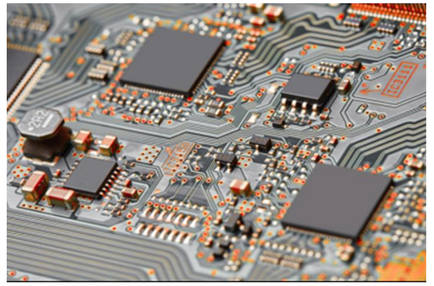
•**Pesticides**: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, toxaphene;

•**Industrial chemicals**: hexachlorobenzene, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); and

•**By-products**: hexachlorobenzene; polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDD/PCDF), and PCBs

- Currently **34 Substances** (or groups) across Three Annexes including some **PFAS** compounds
- **3 further** adopted at COP25 and entry into force in 2026



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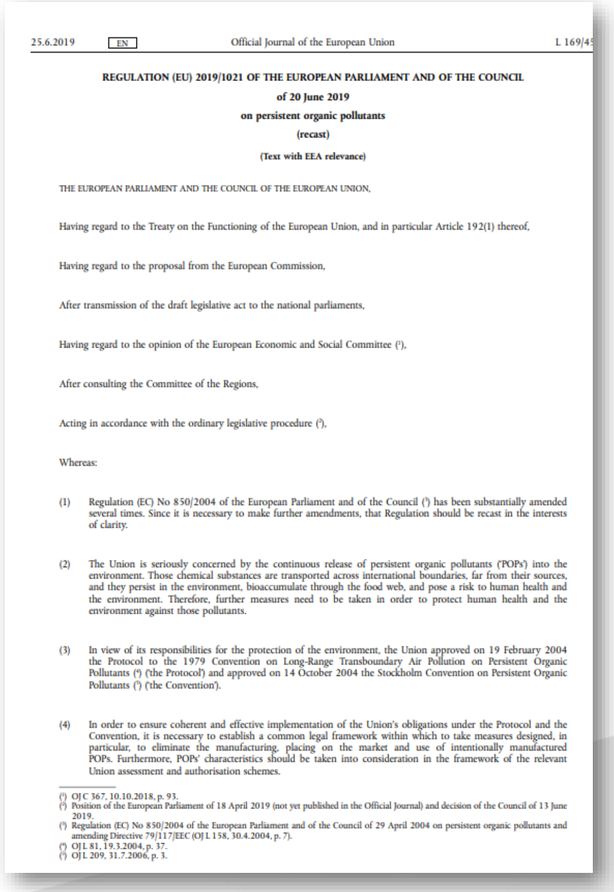
International

Stockholm Convention

IE and EU parties to SC

European

POPs Regulation (EU) 2019/1021



25.6.2019 EN Official Journal of the European Union L 169/45

REGULATION (EU) 2019/1021 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
of 20 June 2019
on persistent organic pollutants
(recast)
(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 192(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee (1),

After consulting the Committee of the Regions,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure (2),

Whereas:

(1) Regulation (EC) No 850/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council (3) has been substantially amended several times. Since it is necessary to make further amendments, that Regulation should be recast in the interests of clarity.

(2) The Union is seriously concerned by the continuous release of persistent organic pollutants ('POPs') into the environment. Those chemical substances are transported across international boundaries, far from their sources, and they persist in the environment, bioaccumulate through the food web, and pose a risk to human health and the environment. Therefore, further measures need to be taken in order to protect human health and the environment against those pollutants.

(3) In view of its responsibilities for the protection of the environment, the Union approved on 19 February 2004 the Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants (4) ('the Protocol') and approved on 14 October 2004 the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (5) ('the Convention').

(4) In order to ensure coherent and effective implementation of the Union's obligations under the Protocol and the Convention, it is necessary to establish a common legal framework within which to take measures designed, in particular, to eliminate the manufacturing, placing on the market and use of intentionally manufactured POPs. Furthermore, POPs' characteristics should be taken into consideration in the framework of the relevant Union assessment and authorisation schemes.

(1) OJ C 367, 10.10.2018, p. 93.
(2) Position of the European Parliament of 18 April 2019 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and decision of the Council of 13 June 2019.
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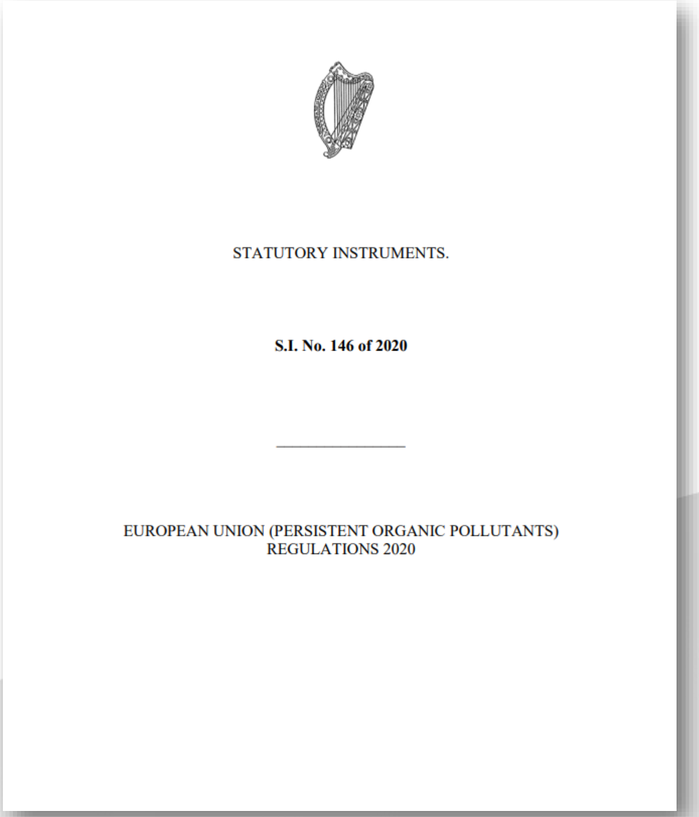
(4) OJ L 81, 19.3.2004, p. 37.
(5) OJ L 209, 31.7.2006, p. 3.

National

S.I. No. 146 of 2020



STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS.

S.I. No. 146 of 2020

EUROPEAN UNION (PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS) REGULATIONS 2020

* The risk profile and risk management evaluation are prepared during the intersessional period between POPRC meetings, which take place once a year (September/October). The POPRC can adopt a decision on the draft risk profile and draft risk management evaluation during a first meeting, but in some cases, the POPRC can decide to defer the decision to the following year's meeting, which lengthens the adoption process.

** The meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) take place once every two years in April/May.

*** Amendments to the Annexes to the Convention enter into force one year after the date of communication of their adoption by the depositary. The depositary notifications (CNs) are usually issued about 6 months after the amendments have been adopted by the COP.

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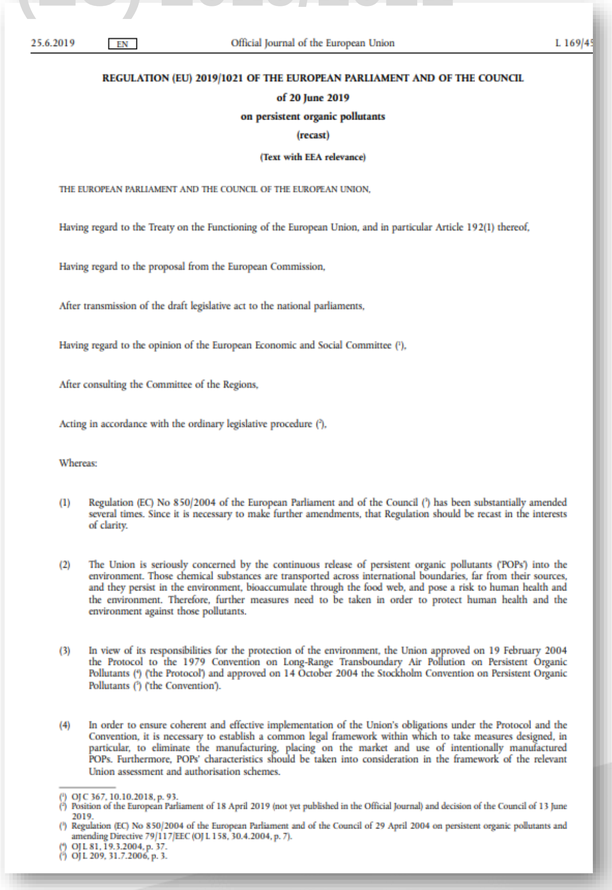

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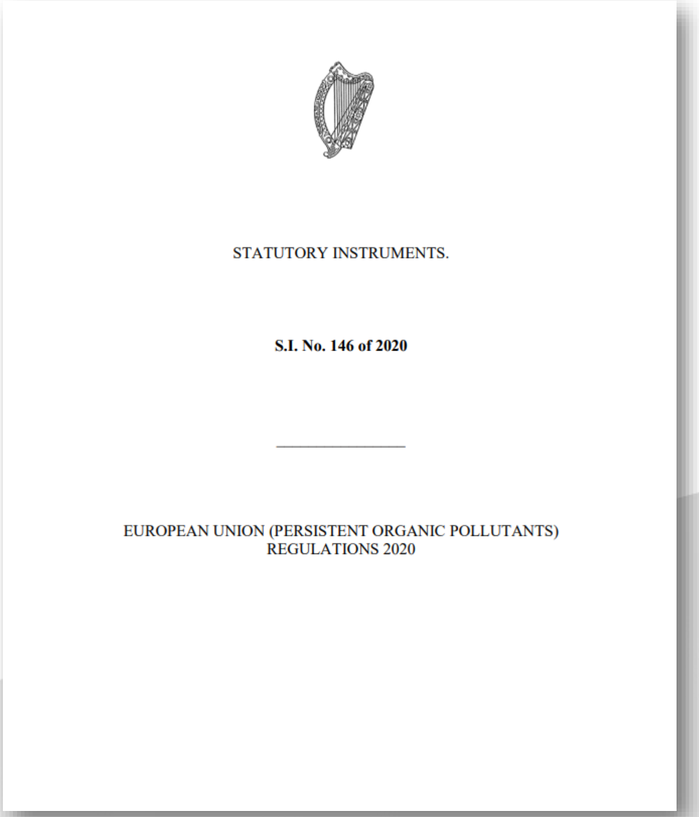

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EUROPEAN UNION (PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS) REGULATIONS 2020

Contents

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Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

Environmental Protection Agency

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteacl
Health and Safety Authority

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara

HPRA An tÚdarás Rialála Táirgí Sláinte
Health Products Regulatory Authority

Organisation	Main responsibilities related to POPs
Department of Communication, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE)	National policy and regulations concerning POPs
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	• Competent Authority for the purposes of the EU POPs Regulation. • Monitoring, permitting, licensing or enforcement systems concerning licensable activities under the EPA Acts and activities under the Dumping at Sea Acts. • Surveillance of products regarding content of POPs.
Health and Safety Authority (HSA)	• Administrative functions required under the EU Prior Informed Consent Regulation for POPs that are listed within this Regulation • Provision of relevant information to the EPA, as appropriate. • Lead competent authority for the REACh Regulation in Ireland.
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)	• Ensure that POPs intended for use as pesticides are not marketed or used. • Monitoring of primary food and feed for the presence of POP pesticides. • Cooperate with the EPA in the identification of any person who produces, places on the market or uses relevant substances containing POPs. • Provision of data to the EPA resulting from monitoring, inspections, checks, examinations and investigations concerning POPs. • Carry out the administrative functions required under the EU Prior Informed Consent Regulation for POPs that are listed within that Regulation and the provision of relevant information to the EPA, as appropriate. • Participate in the ECHA PBT (Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic) Expert Group.
Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) Formerly Irish Medicines Board	• Ensure that medicinal products for human or veterinary use that are authorised for the Irish market do not contain POPs. • Cooperate in the identification of any person who produces, places on the market or uses relevant substances containing POPs. The provision of data to the EPA resulting from monitoring, inspections, checks, examinations and investigations concerning POPs.

(Source: EPA NIP 2018)

Organisation	Main responsibilities related to POPs
Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)	• Monitoring and investigations relating to food and foodstuff containing POPs. • Provision of data to the EPA resulting from monitoring, inspections, checks, examinations and investigations concerning POPs.
Marine Institute (MI)	• Monitor levels of chemical substances in finfish and shellfish to underpin the quality and safety of seafood produced and landed in Ireland in conjunction with the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and the FSAI. • Completion of one-off surveys and research projects (where relevant with other national and international agencies), for instance investigations into occurrence of contaminants not included in regular monitoring.
Health Service Executive (HSE)	• Food sampling, analysis and investigation of POPs in foodstuffs and public awareness of public health issues in consultation with the EPA.
Revenue's Customs Service	• Control at point of importation of specified POPs to be based on criteria agreed with the EPA regarding the identification of consignments of interest to the EPA. • Cooperate, by means of post clearance data exchange in the identification of relevant importations. • Assigned specific responsibilities for the purposes of the EU Prior Informed Consent Regulation in respect of certain hazardous chemicals.
Local Authorities	• Monitoring, permitting or enforcement systems within their functional areas regarding POPs and relevant requirements under the Waste Management, Water Pollution and Air Pollution Acts. • Cooperate in the identification of any person who holds a stockpile or waste containing POPs or who produces, disposes or recovers POPs containing wastes. • The provision of data to the EPA resulting from monitoring, inspections, checks, examinations and investigations concerning POPs.

(Source: EPA NIP 2018)

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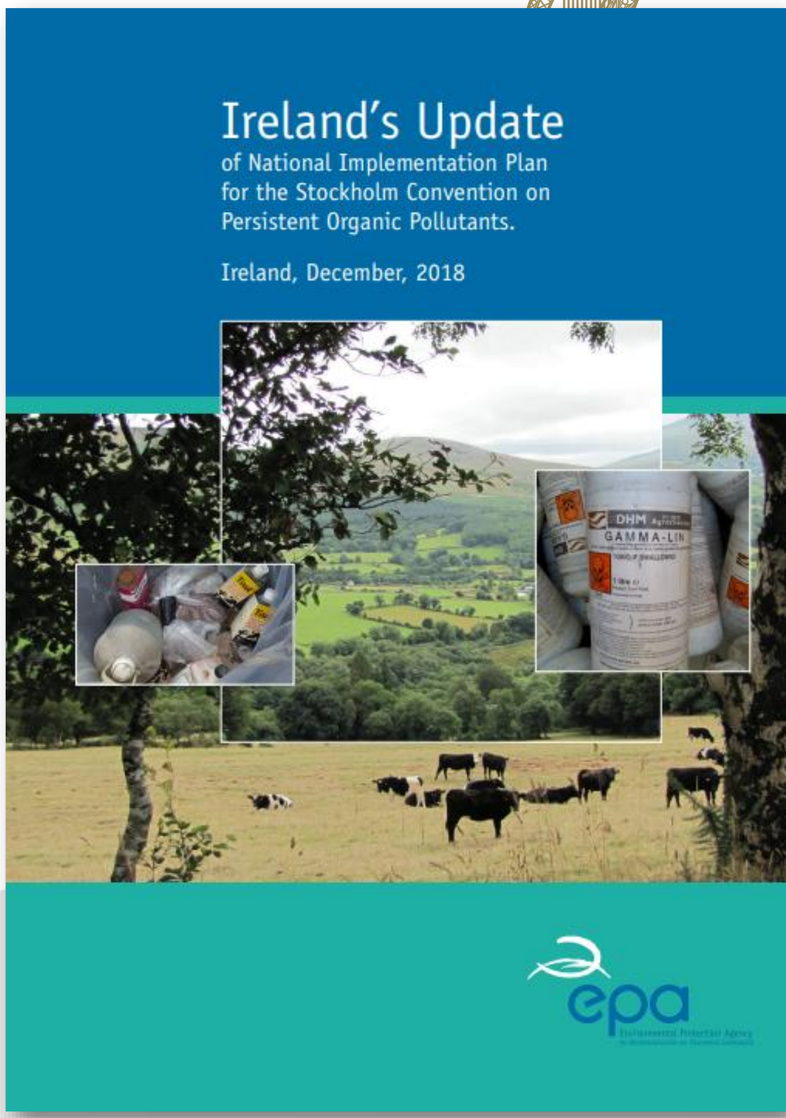
(Source: EPA NIP 2018)

National Implementation Plan (NIP) on POPs

- Required under Article 7 of Stockholm Convention and Art 4 of S.I. 146 of 2020 OR when new POPs are added
- BIP shows how the party will ;
  - **Eliminate** or Restrict POPs (Annex A and B)
  - **Reduce** unintentional release (Annex C)
  - **Manage** Stockpiles and waste
  - **Strengthen** monitoring legislation and awareness
  - **Coordinate** reporting and capacity building

- **NIP Implementation Group** Chaired by EPA
- Updated NIP for Ireland for public consultation **November 2025**



Source: Ireland's update of National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Contents

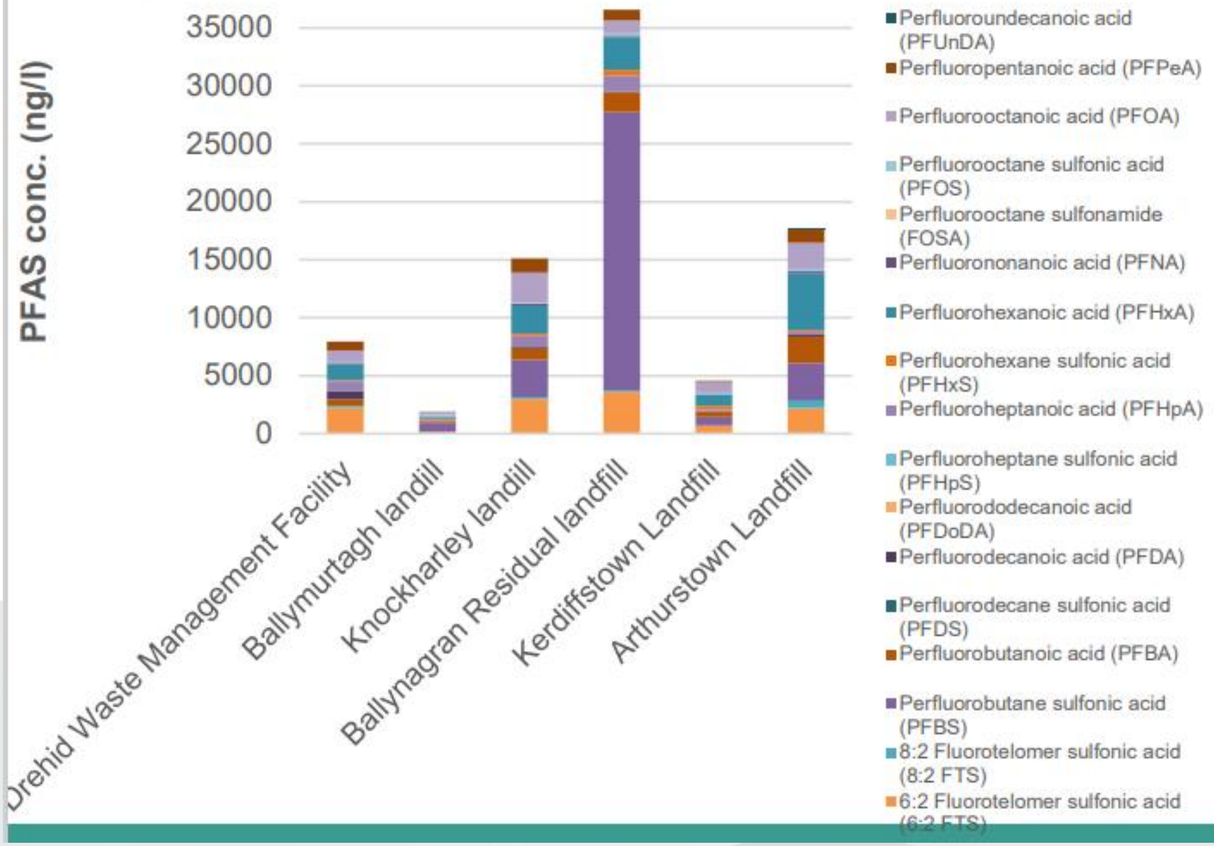
Monitoring of POPs in Ireland – Examples*

- Environmental monitoring e.g. WFD
- Fish monitoring – Marine Institute
- Food Monitoring – FSAI/DAFM
- Milk Monitoring – EPA Dioxins
- Licence conditions e.g. WtE plant Dioxins
- Research projects – e.g. landfill leachate
- Private Monitoring – contamination incidents

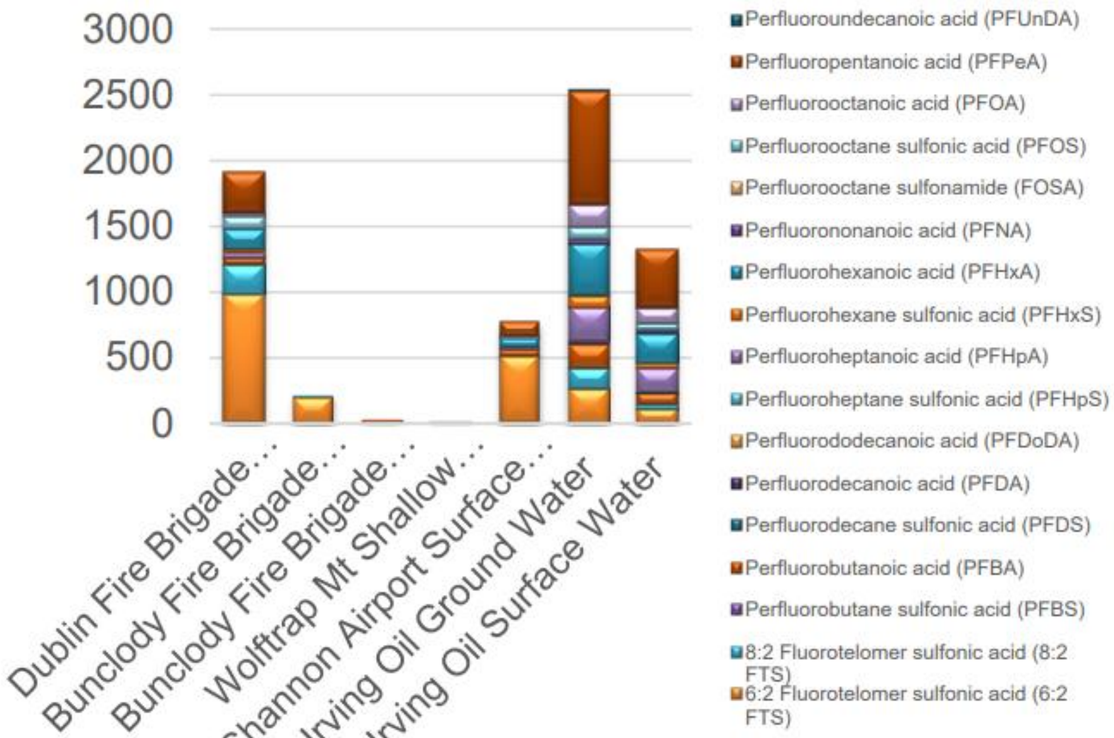
***See EPA POPs website and NIP for further details**

PFAS Studies – Landfill and Fire Stations

PFAS conc. (ng/l) detected in leachate samples (Fuel Research Project 2020)



PFAS conc. (ng/l) detected in water samples (POPs Hotspot Study 2020)

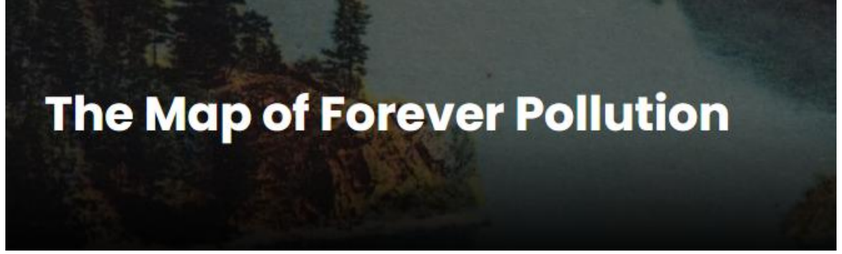


(Source: EPA - Water Conference 2023)

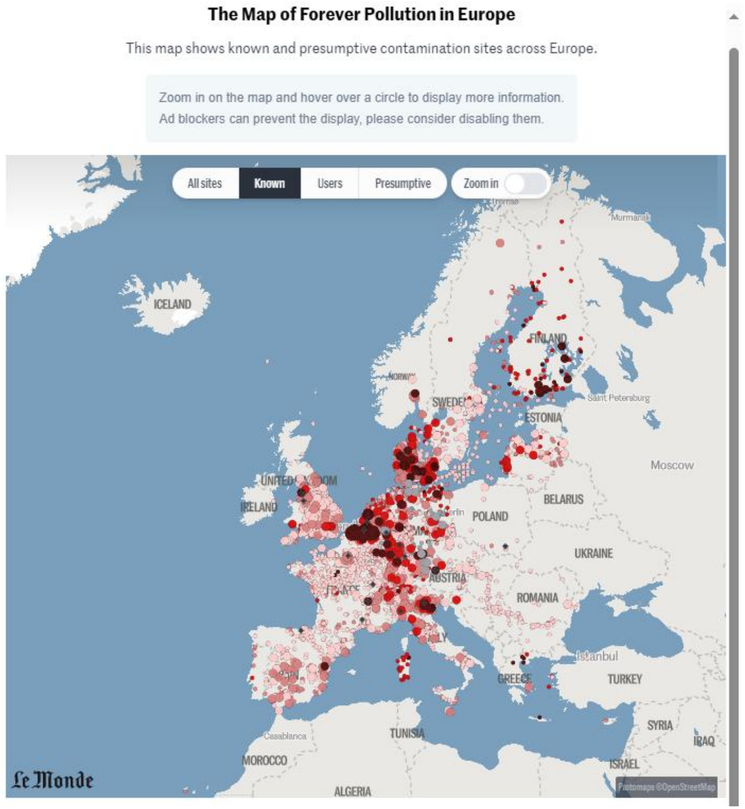
PFAS Monitoring

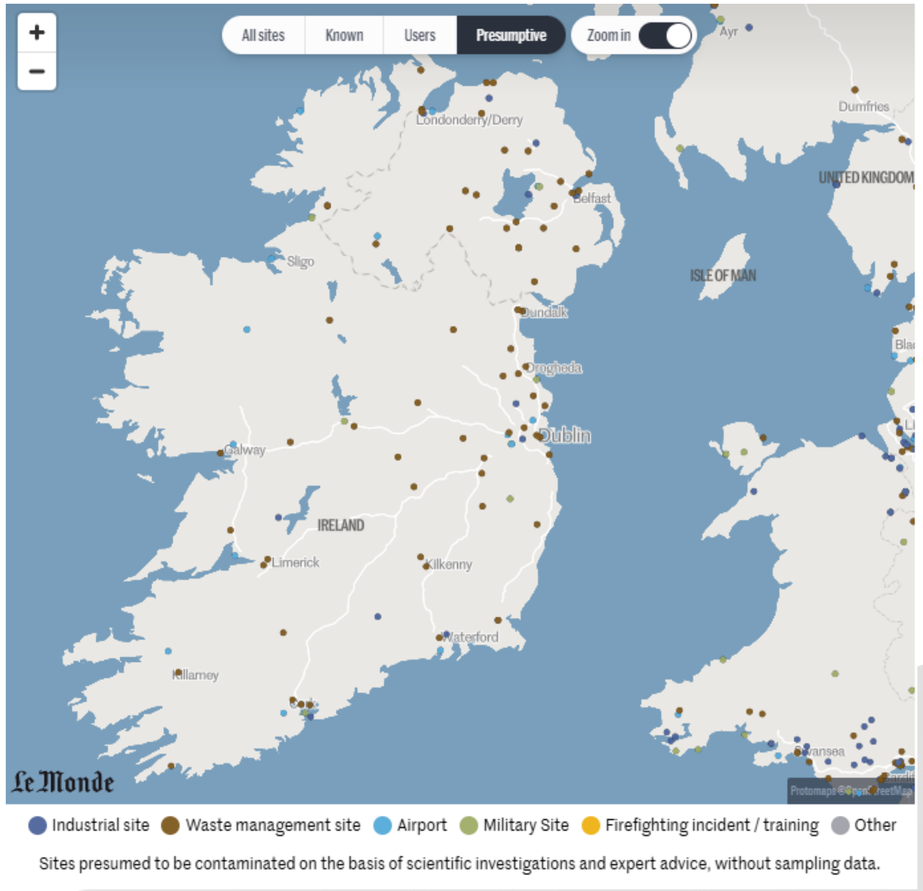
- 2021/2022 POPs ‘hotspot’ campaign monitored River Shannon and River Brosna
- PFOA ranging from 0.010 – 0.045 µg/l detected in River Brosna
- Investigation on going by Westmeath County Council in coordination with EPA.
- Uisce Eireann also made aware of these detects

(Source: EPA - Water Conference 2023)



Le Monde





https://foreverpollution.eu/map/

Case Study 1 – PCBs/Dioxins in Pork

Case Study 1 – PCBs/Dioxins in Pork (2008)

- **November 2008**: Routine **DAFM** analysis discovered the presence of “marker-PCBs. Subsequent testing showed levels of **dioxins** in pork **200** times above legal limits
- **December 6th 2008**: Irish government ordered a complete recall of all Irish pork products from pigs slaughtered from September 1st 2008.
- **December 7th 2008**: European markets ordered to remove tainted pork products from their shelves €100s of millions economic impact and food reputational impact.
- Source found to be the use of **PCB contaminated oil** used to dry feed. Exhaust gases then got deposited in feed and fed pigs etc.

Údarás Sábháilteachta Bia na hÉireann
Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara

Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann
Local Government Ireland

epa Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

Case Stud

- **PFAS** is an
substances
- A group of
as ‘POPs’ u
- **PFAS** are c
their persis
- Some PFA
characteris

- PFAS exam

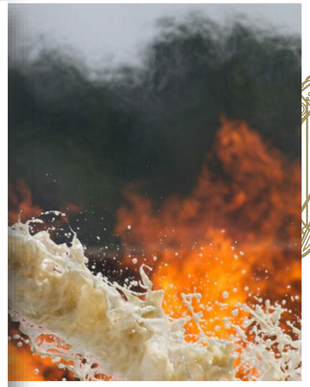


Figure 1: Typical PFAS exposure pathways

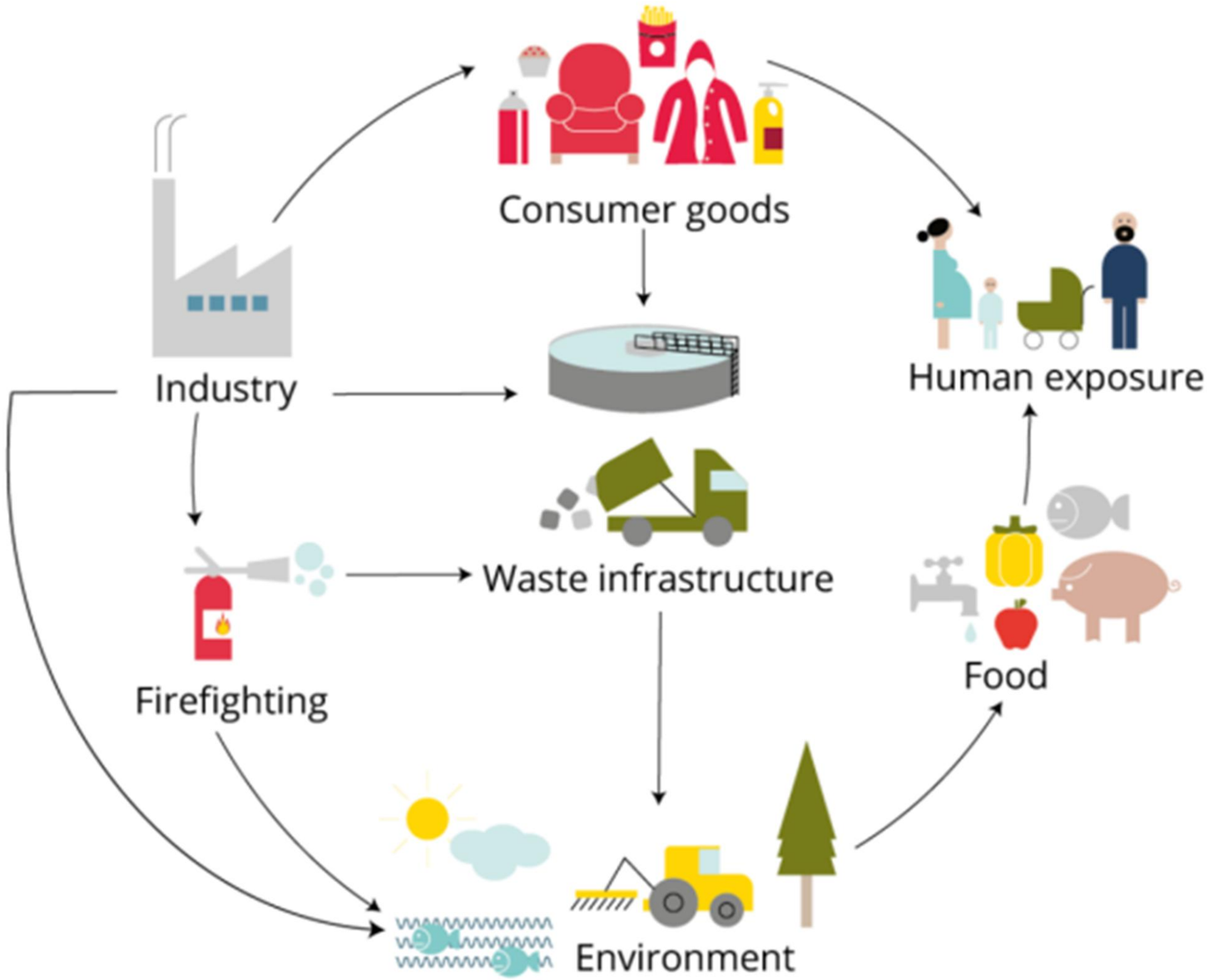


Figure Source: European Environment Agency. Briefing - Emerging chemical risks in Europe — ‘PFAS’ https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/emerging-chemical-risks-in-europe/emerging-chemical-risks-in-europe

Case Study 2 – PFAS in Fire Fighting Foams

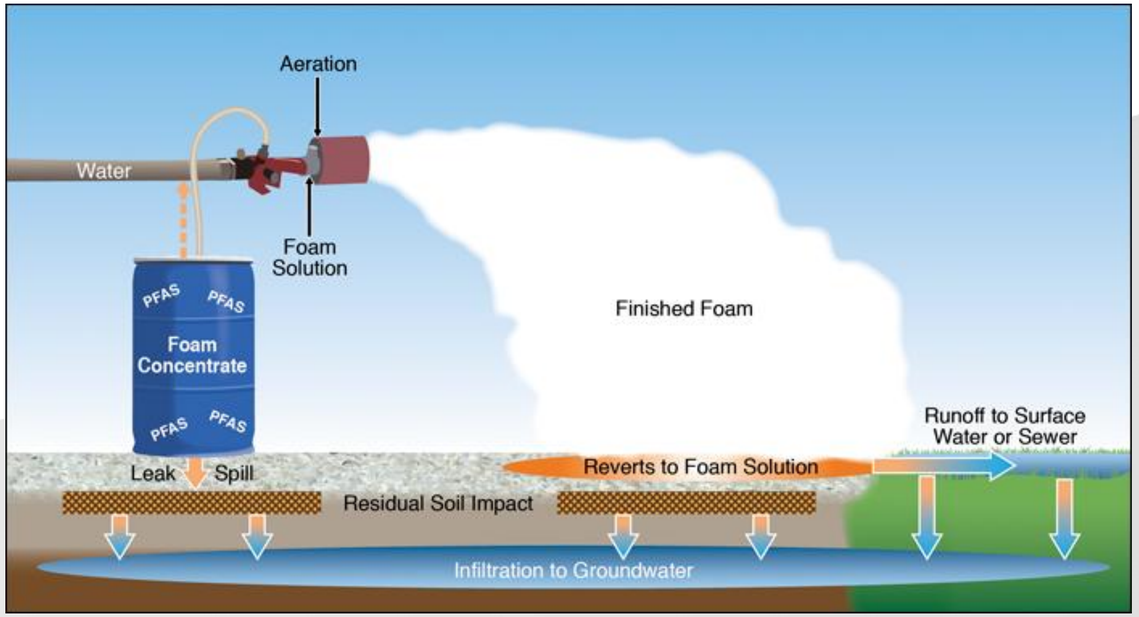
daa

daa publishes results of two-year PFAS risk assessment

Dublin Airport one of 90 sites in Ireland known or suspected to have PFAS issue

daa has published the results of a comprehensive two-year risk assessment of PFAS on the grounds of Dublin Airport.

- Legacy use of AFFFs in airports globally
- Soil and water contamination issues
- LA involvement e.g. Fingal and Cork CC
- Ongoing monitoring and remediation



Source: daa-publishes-results-of-two-year-pfas-risk-assessment---statement-april-2024.pdf

Case Stu 7)

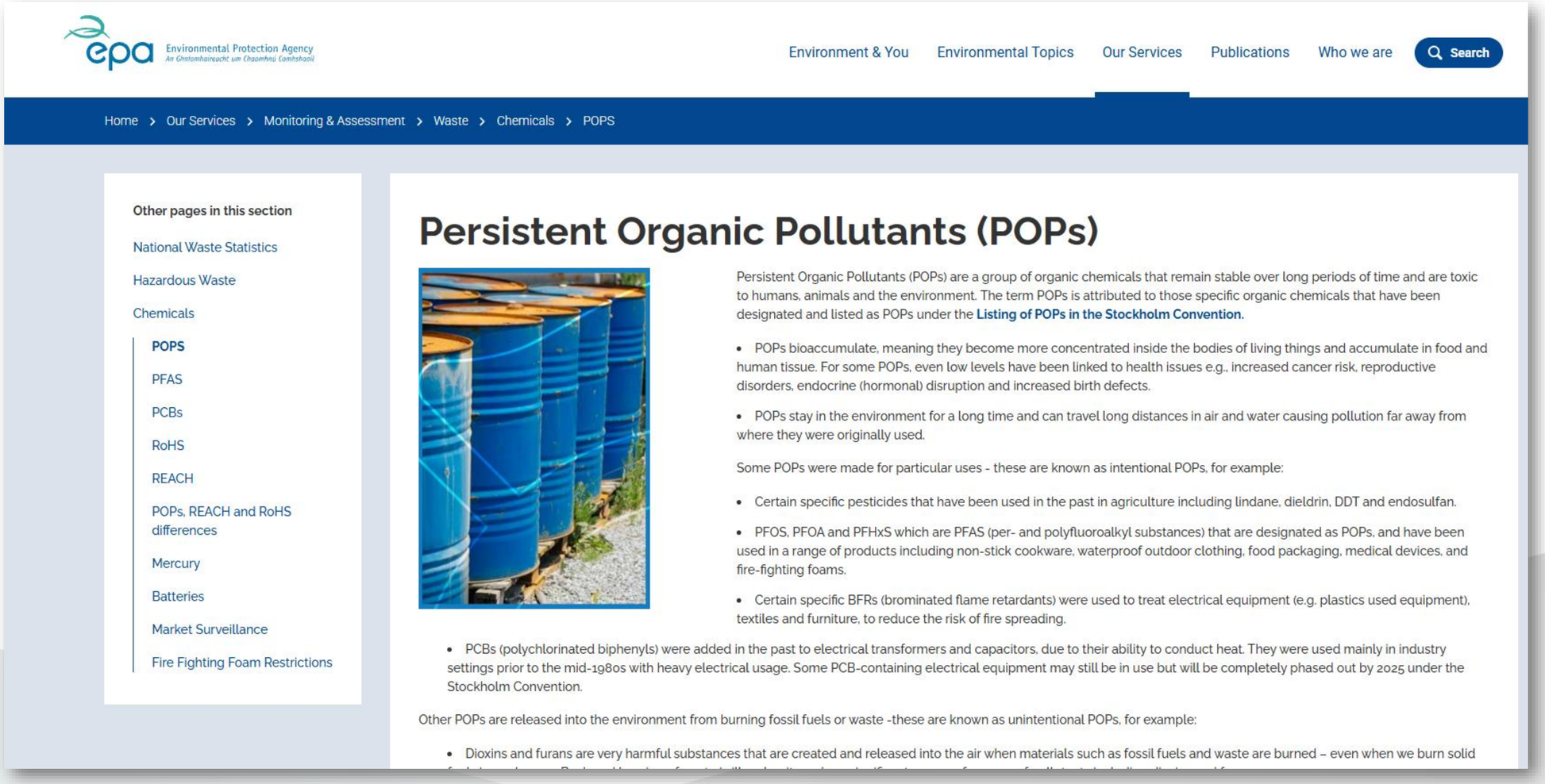
- Complaint to W
- Fire briquette / I
- Unannounced S
- Conveyor – trom magnets – feeds
- “contaminated” v
- Site directed to c
- Waste authorisa
- Fully permitted a

- Acknowledgeme

(*Please note image above is not of the actual product investigated)

Contents

Further information on POPs



epa Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

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Home > Our Services > Monitoring & Assessment > Waste > Chemicals > POPS

Other pages in this section

- National Waste Statistics
- Hazardous Waste
- Chemicals
  - **POPS**
  - PFAS
  - PCBs
  - RoHS
  - REACH
  - POPs, REACH and RoHS differences
  - Mercury
  - Batteries
  - Market Surveillance
  - Fire Fighting Foam Restrictions

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Source: POPS | Environmental Protection Agency

Guidance documents….

Environmental Protection Agency

GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES REGARDING LANDS POTENTIALLY IMPACTED BY POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS (PCBs).

Guidance Leaflet
PFOA in Fire-Fighting Foams

Why are some PFAS a problem?

Per- and polyfluoroalkylated substances (PFAS) are a group of manmade chemicals that may be found in aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) used in some fire suppression systems, including portable handheld fire extinguishers. While PFAS encompass a very large number of substances and the effects of most of these are unknown, PFAS (such as perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS)) are widely recognised as harmful to humans and the environment. PFAS are often described as the "forever chemicals" due to their persistent nature - meaning they break down very slowly, if at all, in the environment and so can pose long term risks. Furthermore, many PFAS present in fire-fighting foams are both bioavailable and bioaccumulative, meaning they are easily absorbed by living organisms and can increase in concentration within the body. PFAS discharged on land, can contaminate the soil, or be washed off into streams, rivers, potentially contaminating groundwater and drinking water supplies.

Controls on PFOS and PFOA

Fire-fighting foams commonly contain PFAS, including PFOS historically and, more recently, PFOA. PFOS and its related substances were severely restricted under the Stockholm Convention in May 2009, followed by restrictions on PFOA its salts and its related compounds in May 2019. While the use of PFOS is already banned, there are some time-limited exemptions for the use of PFOA its salts and related compounds, under the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Regulation (EU) 2019/1021. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for overseeing implementation of the POPs Regulation's requirements in Ireland.

While the current focus is the time-limited restrictions on the use of PFOA, its salts and PFOA-related compounds, further restrictions are likely to extend to other PFAS including proposals under the EU Chemical Strategy for Sustainability to eliminate all non-essential uses of PFAS which may include usage in AFFF. With further restrictions likely, it is recommended that you consider switching to PFAS free alternatives, known as "fluorine free" foams, in the coming years.

The restrictions on AFFF containing PFOA and its salts at concentrations above 0.025mg/kg, and PFOA-related compounds at total concentrations above 1mg/kg (hereafter referred to as "AFFF containing PFOA") are as follows:

Applicable Date	Restriction(s)
From July 4, 2020	• All existing stocks of AFFF containing PFOA installed in a premises may only be used for Class B fires[1]. • Use of AFFF containing PFOA is prohibited for training purposes. • Testing of equipment/systems of AFFF containing PFOA is only allowed if releases are contained and can be properly disposed of.
From January 1, 2023	Uses of AFFF containing PFOA are permitted only where foam release can be contained.
From July 4, 2025	All uses of AFFF containing PFOA are prohibited.

If your fire systems (including handheld fire extinguishers) have AFFF containing PFOA, then the following obligations apply to you:

Applicable Date	Obligation(s)
From July 04, 2020	• Notification to the EPA is required if you intend to continue to use AFFF containing PFOA for the permitted purposes. • Any AFFF containing PFOA that are to be discarded, must be managed as a waste using a suitably authorised waste contractor. This applies to suppliers and end users. • If the total weight of AFFF containing PFOA contained within fire suppression systems, including hand-held extinguishers exceeds, 50 kg, at a given location, you must notify such stocks to the EPA and report to the EPA of the continued retention of these foams annually. • Please note: The deadline for receipt of report of stocks of greater than 50kg of AFFF containing PFOA is the 4th July annually.
From July 4,2025	• All existing stocks of AFFF containing PFOA must be managed appropriately by a suitably authorised waste management contractor (please check EPA website at www.pops.ie for lists of contractors). • Notification made to the EPA of proper disposal/management of stocks of AFFF containing PFOA including proof of appropriate management.

[1] Class B Fires – Flammable Liquids (petrol, diesel, spirits, paint, etc.)

HSE National Drinking Water Group Dec 2022

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
PFAS in Drinking Water

NOTE: Research in the area of PFAS is ongoing. New scientific evidence is likely to emerge in the short and medium term. These FAQs are therefore interim and will be kept under review.

What are PFAS?

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are man-made chemicals. Approximately 4,700 PFAS have been identified to date (1).

PFAS have been used in many industrial and consumer products since the 1950s (1).

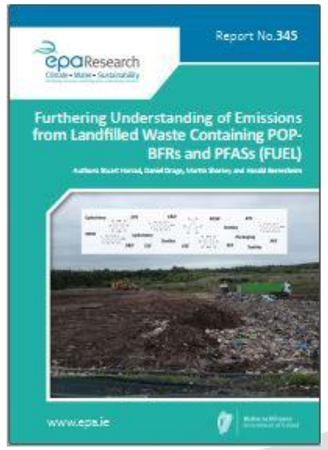
- They are used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water (2).
- PFAS have the ability to reduce friction and are used in a variety of industries including aerospace, construction, automotive and electronics and can be found in a range of different products (3).
- Some specific products that may contain PFAS include (4,5):
  - Some grease-resistant paper, fast food containers/wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, pizza boxes, and sweet wrappers
  - Non-stick cookware
  - Stain resistant coatings used on carpets, upholstery, and other fabrics
  - Water-resistant clothing
  - Cleaning products
  - Personal care products (shampoo, dental floss) and cosmetics (nail polish, eye makeup)
  - Paints, varnishes, and sealants
  - Firefighting foams

Local_Authority_Guidance_on_PCB-contaminated_Land_Rev1.2.pdf

EPA research projects that might be of interest

- Ongoing Project. Assessment of the Environmental Contamination of Irish Soils and Sediments with Hazardous Chemicals (Terrachem Project) - terrachem - University of Galway

- EPA Research Report 345: Furthering Understanding of Emissions from Landfilled Waste Containing POPBFRs and PFASs (FUEL)



- EPA Published Report - Determining Historic and Current PFAS Levels in AFFF in the Republic of Ireland

- EPA Published Report - Persistent Organic Pollutants, Landfill Leachate Sampling Study

Further info

- Stockholm Convention - Home page
- Source: UN The New POPs
- List of substances subject to POPs Regulation - ECHA

Coming soon…..

- **NEW POPs awareness course** for LAs and other public authorities
- Course will cover;
    - Sources of POPs, legislation, monitoring, case studies, POPs research….
- Planned introductory **Webinar** – possibly by year end with **in-person** courses in early 2026
- Further information from LASNTG

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Go raibh maith agaibh

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