

PFAS Frequently Asked Questions

What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals known for their resistance to heat, grease, oil, and water. These substances have been used in a wide range of consumer and industrial products since the 1950s.

Why are we under a Do Not Drink Order?

On April 10, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced new Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for certain PFAS chemicals in public drinking water systems. These updated regulations aim to protect public health by reducing exposure to harmful contaminants. PFAS have been linked to potential health risks, and Vermont has regulated these chemicals in public water supplies since 2019.

The State of Vermont is reviewing the new federal regulations through its Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation. Unfortunately, some businesses and resorts in Stowe, including The Mountainside Resort, have not met the newly established drinking water standards, resulting in a Do Not Drink order. Historically, our PFAS levels have been below the threshold of 20 parts per trillion. However, a recent single reading exceeded that threshold, which led to the order. We have always followed proper procedures, including daily testing and sending water samples to the state throughout the year.

What does a Do Not Drink order mean?

A Do Not Drink order prohibits the use of water for any consumptive purposes, including:

- Drinking
- Cooking
- Brushing teeth
- Making ice or baby formula
- Washing fruits and vegetables

Alternative water sources, such as bottled water, should be used for all consumptive needs. Water can still be used for non-consumptive purposes, such as:

- Showering and bathing (though children should avoid swallowing the water)
- Washing hands
- Washing clothes and dishes

Important: Boiling the water will not remove PFAS contaminants. In fact, it may concentrate them further. Bottled water is available daily between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. at the Pool Center Building.

What can the water be used for?

Permitted uses:

- Washing dishes
- Washing hands
- Showering and bathing
- Washing clothes

Prohibited uses:

- Drinking or cooking
- Brushing teeth
- Boiling for food preparation (e.g., pasta)

What steps are being taken to resolve this issue?

We are actively working with the State of Vermont and the Town of Stowe to connect The Mountainside Resort to the municipal water supply.

Can I install a water filter?

While some water filters may reduce PFAS levels, the Do Not Drink order remains in effect for all condominiums at The Mountainside Resort. Therefore, water from any tap, even with a filter, should not be used for drinking or cooking.

What options do I have for water consumption?

Many owners have chosen to rent water dispensers and are receiving regular bi-weekly water deliveries. This provides a convenient and reliable alternative for clean drinking water.

How has the issue affected other owners who rent their condominiums?

The impact on rental operations has been minimal, based on feedback from other owners. We recommend that you coordinate with your management company to inform guests of the "Do Not Drink" order prior to their arrival. This proactive communication can help minimize potential complaints and ensure a smoother guest experience.

What is the resort doing to help?

The resort has set up water dispensers in the Pool Center and gym. Complimentary bottled water is also available at the front office. Additionally, we receive bi-weekly shipments of over 30 five-gallon water jugs from Vermont Heritage to ensure a steady supply for our guests and residents.