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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Dane County Landfill Leachate – Emerging Contaminants

1. What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used in thousands of industrial and consumer products. The chemical properties of PFAS result in products that repel water and oil and can put out fires, but these properties also allow for PFAS to persist in the environment.

2. Where are PFAS found?

Widespread use of PFAS started in the 1940s and PFAS have been detected throughout urban, agricultural, and even remote environments worldwide. Due to widespread use and their persistence in the environment, PFAS have been found in rainwater, surface water, groundwater, the atmosphere, soil, sediment, and in the serum and tissue of plants and animals, including humans.

3. What waste materials may contain PFAS?

PFAS have been used in many everyday products including some food packaging, non-stick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain resistant fabrics and carpets, cosmetics, firefighting foams, products that resist grease, water, and oil, and more ([Learn about PFAS | ATSDR](#)). Additionally, PFAS are found in aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) that has been historically used for fire suppression and training activities. PFAS have also been found in solid waste products accepted at landfills and sanitary and industrial wastewater at wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs). Landfills and WWTPs are considered passive receivers because they do not produce PFAS. However, in many cases landfills and WWTPs have unknowingly accepted products that contained PFAS

and are now responsible for the management of these wastes simply due to the services they provide.

4. What are the regulations for PFAS waste handling?

On July 8, 2024, the USEPA designated two types of PFAS, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). This allows USEPA to address PFAS contamination and seek reimbursement for cleanup activities from the responsible parties (polluters). USEPA also provided guidance that allows municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills to accept certain PFAS-containing materials to aid in keeping PFAS out of the environment. There are currently no regulations preventing MSW landfills from accepting PFAS containing wastes. Until then, Dane County will continue to make decisions regarding waste acceptance based on the current acceptance criteria established for the Rodefild Landfill.

5. How is the Rodefild Landfill protective of the environment?

The Rodefild Landfill is an MSW landfill that is designed and operated to contain the contaminants released from waste products during their decomposition, including PFAS. It is a fully lined landfill with a leachate collection system. As waste materials break down, the liquid component, known as leachate, is released into the landfill base and collected through a series of pipes. The leachate is removed from the landfill and sent for treatment. A stormwater management system is in place to appropriately collect and manage stormwater at the landfill.

6. What is Dane County currently doing to address PFAS?

Dane County has taken a proactive approach to PFAS management. County staff are staying up to date on PFAS technical and regulatory developments through the Interstate Technology Regulatory Council (ITRC) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The County has teamed with local experts to evaluate the landfill's operations and handling/ acceptance of waste likely to contain PFAS.

7. How can I reduce my PFAS footprint?

Be aware that products designed to be stain resistant, waterproof, and long-lasting may likely contain PFAS. Some of these products may have PFAS-free alternatives with more being developed as time goes by. Some states are taking steps to limit the use of PFAS in our products and have instituted laws requiring notification of its use within goods. At this time, PFAS chemicals are present in our waste materials; however, by design, lined landfills are considered a safe disposal option.

8. How do I dispose of PFAS containing products?

PFAS containing wastes may be disposed of within lined landfills as long as the landfill is willing to accept the materials. Additionally, in Wisconsin, some waste materials may also be accepted by solid waste incinerators, compost facilities, solid waste processing facilities, and material recovery facilities.