



# **FDSA**

**FIRE DEPT SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

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## **Bulletin 36.1**

### **Why are we Monitoring PFAS Exposure in Fire Service Personnel?**

**October 1, 2025**

There is growing awareness in the fire service and their exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). This concern has led to several research efforts to study and better understand sources of exposure, the extent of exposure, and the health effects. As initiated by Congress, there are efforts underway to remove these chemicals from firefighting foams and the turnout gear worn by firefighters.

Exposure to PFAS is associated with cancer risk, thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis, elevated cholesterol, respiratory disease, decreased fertility and a reduced immune response which has gained notable attention during the current pandemic conditions.

Biomonitoring describes the monitoring of chemicals, such as toxins, in the human body to assess exposure from the environment. Data is used to determine which chemicals are getting into people's bodies, track exposure trends, and monitor people with chemicals at a level above a toxicity limit or a level of concern. This is different than a clinical test a doctor might prescribe to provide a diagnosis and treatment plan.

There is currently no diagnosis or treatment recommendations specific to elevated PFAS levels. There are, however, recommendations for ways to limit or reduce exposure to PFAS chemicals.

Testing for PFAS in blood is traditionally done using serum which requires a blood draw from a phlebotomist or other healthcare practitioner. Although this type of test does not require a doctor's order to obtain, it may be required by a health insurer for reimbursement purposes.

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