

An Introduction to PFAS – The Forever Chemicals

Charles (Chuck) Neslund, Scientific Officer and PFAS Practice Leader,
Eurofins Environment Testing US

PFAS (Per- and Polyfluorinated alkyl substances) are a class of compounds used in the manufacture of fluoropolymers, AFFF (aqueous film forming foam) and a wide variety of consumer products. The unique chemistry that has rendered them durable and useful for a variety of consumer products also has made it more difficult to manage and treat these contaminants in the environment.

EPA developed its first method for the analysis of PFAS in 2008-2009, but that was limited to drinking water. As we have gained knowledge of the persistence and presence of these chemicals in the environment, several other analytical approaches have been developed and implemented for detecting and monitoring PFAS in the environment.

Our discussion will briefly cover the unique chemistry of PFAS, its wide variety of uses and the growing legislation around the regulation of these chemicals. Additionally, we will discuss analytical efforts to develop methodologies for the analysis of PFAS so that we can accurately determine contamination, sources of contamination and assess the effectiveness of treatment technologies.