

Q1. What is PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances)?

A1. Please visit the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) website for specific information: www.michigan.gov/PFASresponse

Q2. What does PFAS have to do with airports?

A2. The use of firefighting material known as AFFF, or aqueous film-forming foam, is a FAA requirement for all commercial airports across the country, and has been used for extinguishing fires and for firefighting training at airports. Currently, all of the AFFF formulations authorized for use by the FAA contain some type of PFAS.

Q3. Is the Ford Airport still using products with PFAS?

A3. All FAA-required AFFF products contain some form of PFAS. The use of AFFF is a FAA requirement for all commercial airports across the country, and has been used for extinguishing fires and for firefighting training at airports nationally. For air transportation safety, FAA requires airports like GFIA to use AFFF containing PFAS because of its effectiveness in extinguishing jet-fuel fires. The Ford Airport took proactive steps by voluntarily moving to an AFFF product that is asserted to have less environmental risk. However, all FAA-required AFFF products still contain some form of PFAS.

Q4. What is being done to understand any potential issues?

A4. GFIA has handled and used AFFF consistent with safety data sheet instructions from the manufacturer. It is important to note – we have had no environmental, health, or safety complaints about AFFF or any evidence regarding PFAS contamination as a result of airport operations. We have been in contact with the MDEQ as we work in collaboration to investigate concerns further.

We are working with environmental specialists to conduct an investigation of the potential of PFAS exposure at the airport, considering the limited areas of known use of AFFF at GFIA and the local geology.

Q5. When will this testing begin and will you test residential wells?

A5. We have begun the investigation by testing sites on airport property in the vicinity of the previous fire training facility. We are working with a specialized laboratory to conduct these tests, one of a limited number of labs in the country using EPA-approved test methods for PFAS. At this stage in the investigation, off-site testing is not warranted. Based upon the results received and further discussions with MDEQ, the investigation may continue off-site.

Q6. If a resident receives results of a PFAS test, what should they do next?

A6. The Michigan Department of Environment Quality (MDEQ) is asking residents with any test results to contact their offices at 1-800-662-9278 or deq-assist@michigan.gov

Q7. Does the Kent County Health Department collect or test water for PFAS?

A7. It is our understanding that at this time they do not.