

Fact Sheet – Trial for treatment of washwaters containing dilute PFAS concentrations

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly referred to as PFAS, are an emerging contaminant of concern. As outlined in the January 2018 National PFAS Management Plan commissioned by the national Heads of the Environmental Protection Agency (HEPA), PFAS are highly stable chemicals which have been manufactured for over 50 years and used in a wide range of consumer products for residential, commercial and industrial markets. Due to high solubility in water, PFAS is readily mobile, and hence is recognised as likely to be widely spread in areas where PFAS-containing products have been used, along with wastewater treatment networks and solid waste disposal facilities.

Cleanaway has successfully implemented a filtration system to remove PFAS substances from dilute washwaters in Victoria, and is seeking authorisation from SA EPA to trial the technology under Environmental Authorisation 15195, at Wingfield in South Australia. The trial is to conduct a filtration process, so that PFAS compounds are bound within a filtering medium and can be sent offsite for destruction at a licenced facility. There will be no destruction activities conducted as part of this trial at the Wingfield site, and no discharge to the environment.

Common Questions & Answers

Q: Does this trial include treating highly-concentrated PFAS materials such as Aqueous Fire Fighting Foam?

A: No. Materials with high concentrations of PFAS will not be treated on site. Destruction via high-temperature incineration in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland will remain the solution for any of these wastes generated in South Australia.

Q: What happens to the PFAS materials?

A: This trial will test a filtration process, to remove dilute concentrations of PFAS from large volumes of water, allowing the PFAS to be captured and contained within the filtration unit. The used filters and PFAS are then sent interstate for destruction via incineration.

Q: Will any PFAS wastes be disposed of in Wingfield

A: No. PFAS materials in used filters will be sent offsite for destruction via incineration

Q: How will PFAS wastes be isolated from the environment?

A: Incoming containers of wastes containing low concentrations of PFAS are stored in a dedicated concrete bund, which provides secure & impervious secondary containment. The bund is isolated from the remainder of the site. Containers are inspected to ensure integrity, and the storage area is carefully managed to minimize traffic.

Q: Will this project increase the risk of PFAS contamination into local groundwater?

A: No. PFAS-containing products have been commonly used in residential, commercial and industrial settings for the past few decades. As a result PFAS can be commonly found in soil and water in industrial areas, particularly where any fire-fighting training has been conducted. This filtration process will provide an avenue to remove dilute concentrations of PFAS from liquids.

Q: Will PFAS wastes contaminate other waste streams?

A: No. PFAS storage and treatment occur within the dedicated PFAS bund.

Further Questions / Concerns?

Please contact Cleanaway on 13 13 39 or cs.liquidssa@cleanaway.com.au to request further information. Key contacts are:

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