Growing with Confidence: PFAS Information for Loop® Biosolids Users

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **PFAS is pervasive in everyday products.**
- **King County regularly tests for PFAS in biosolids and levels are low.**
- **Public Health – Seattle & King County has guidance on how you can reduce PFAS exposure in your daily life.**

Wastewater Treatment and Loop® Biosolids Products

At the King County Wastewater Treatment Division, our mission is to protect public health and the environment. We do this by collecting and cleaning wastewater while recycling valuable resources to support a thriving Puget Sound region.

The Benefits of Using Loop Biosolids

King County biosolids, called Loop, are made by cleaning, recycling, and transforming 100% of the poop and food that goes down toilets and drains.

For almost 50 years, Loop biosolids have been safely used to improve soil and provide an alternative to synthetic fertilizer. Decades of testing show Loop is a nutrient-rich, high-quality soil amendment with rigorous safeguards. Applying Loop supports soil health, increases soil carbon and contributes to sustainable agriculture and forestry across Washington. Loop Compost, made with Loop, can be used in gardens and landscapes.

Regulation and Safety of Biosolids: We exceed the strict standards

- Washington law requires biosolids be “beneficially reused” rather than landfilled (RCW70A.226.005).
- King County biosolids are regulated under the U.S. Clean Water Act and by the Washington State Department of Ecology.
- Biosolids are subject to more stringent testing than any other soil amendment, manure, or fertilizer available to the public.
- Loop biosolids are high quality: All King County biosolids are rigorously tested for physical, chemical, and microbial safety. Our annual Loop Biosolids Quality Data Summary is available here: kingcounty.gov/wtd/biosolids/resources

Overview of PFAS: What are they

- PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a large group of human-made chemicals used since the 1940s. They've historically been used to make products water, grease, and stain resistant.
- They are common in household and commercial products such as nonstick cookware, stain resistant textiles, personal care products, food packaging, and firefighting foams.
- PFAS are widespread and intentionally designed to not break down easily; they enter wastewater systems as people wash, clean, cook, and dispose of everyday products.
- PFAS are everywhere around us and can be found in water, soil, rain, and even dust in our homes. Their widespread use in our day-to-day products, coupled with their long-lasting and durable structure, contributes to their presence in the environment around us.

  For more information visit: doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/pfas

Sources of PFAS

Putting PFAS in Perspective: What you can do to reduce your exposure

- Look for products with the "Safer Choice" label. All Safer Choice products are PFAS-free.
- Use your voice: People have contacted retailers, manufacturers, and elected officials to ask for PFAS-free products.

  Please refer questions about health risks and the highest sources of human exposure to Public Health – Seattle & King County.

For more information visit:

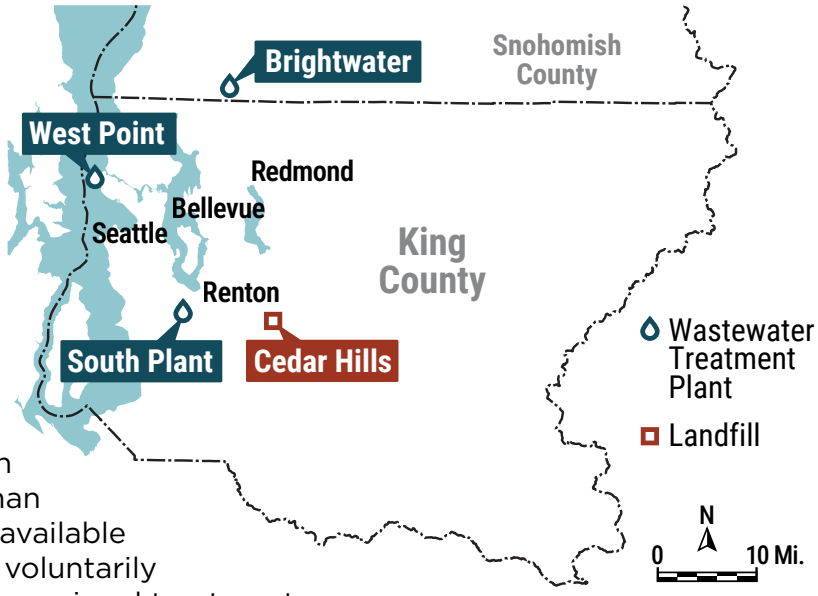
- What you can do about PFAS. Learn how to limit your exposure to PFAS, also known as "forever chemicals" that can be harmful to your health. kingcounty.gov/pfas/action
- What are PFAS and why are they harmful?A comic strip explains. https://bit.ly/pfas-comic-strip
- Meaningful and Achievable Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Risk | US EPA https://bit.ly/reduce-pfas-risk

What we know about biosolids and PFAS

- Biosolids do not create PFAS. Wastewater utilities are "passive receivers" of what people send down household and business drains.
- Reports of PFAS-impacted farms in places such as Maine reflect biosolids contaminated by industrial waste streams (such as pulp and paper mills). These biosolids are very different from most municipal biosolids, including King County's. King County's wastewater system is approximately 95% residential flows, and 5% commercial/industrial.
- King County implements a robust pre-treatment program that works across the service area with businesses to reduce regulated, industrial pollutants from entering the sewer system. Industrial dischargers are being surveyed for PFAS use in their businesses.

What we know about PFAS in Loop: Levels are low

- King County does not have PFAS manufacturing facilities or known heavy industrial PFAS users.
- PFAS levels in King County biosolids are low and fall within the average range for wastewater systems in areas without industrial PFAS sources.
- King County completed a PFAS study from October 2023 to August 2024 to understand PFAS levels across the wastewater system. The study found low levels consistent with everyday household sources rather than industrial pollution. These results are available online, and King County continues to voluntarily monitor PFAS every month at all three regional treatment plants. **View King County PFAS data and test results at:** kingcounty.gov/pfas/data



- Current state and federal law do not set PFAS limits for biosolids; however, King County's levels meet or fall below health-protective guidance adopted in other states such as Michigan. **PFAS in biosolids:** bit.ly/pfas-biosolids-data
- New statewide PFAS sampling rules require routine PFAS monitoring of biosolids beginning January 2027. King County's current commitment to monthly sampling is three times more frequent than the requirements set by the Washington Department of Ecology. **View details:** https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2607033.html

King County's continued efforts

- **Monitoring:** King County continues to test Loop biosolids PFAS concentrations every month using EPA Method 1633, the national standard for PFAS analysis in solids.
- **Source Control:** King County prioritizes preventing PFAS from entering the wastewater system by working with businesses, consumers, and regulators. The most effective way to reduce PFAS in wastewater is preventing them from entering the system—through bans on PFAS in products, consumer education, safer product choices, and upstream industry action.
- **Interagency Collaboration:** King County's Wastewater Treatment Division continues to work with multiple agencies, including Public Health – Seattle & King County, to take a regional approach to managing contaminants such as PFAS. Addressing these harmful chemicals requires a collective effort, and we are supporting state and federal laws, regulations, funding and programs that promote source control and producer responsibility.
- **Ongoing Research:** PFAS are considered "emerging contaminants," meaning research and regulation are evolving as agencies learn more about potential impacts. King County partners with researchers at Washington State University, University of Arizona, and other institutions to help us understand the impact, both positive and negative, of using biosolids.

More information about King County's efforts can be found at: kingcounty.gov/pfas

Additional Loop Biosolids information

Loop Quality & Testing: loopforyoursoil.com/quality-and-testing/

Leading with Science: kingcounty.gov/wtd/biosolids/leading-with-science

King County Biosolids Information and Reports: kingcounty.gov/wtd/biosolids/resources

News Release & Video: kingcounty.gov/wtd/biosolids/farmland

Contact Us

Email: loop@kingcounty.gov
Phone: 206-477-5371

King County Wastewater Treatment Division
201 S. Jackson St., KSC-NR-6200
Seattle, WA 98104

Visit our webpage: LoopForYourSoil.com/Loop-Compost

Alternative formats available. Please call 206-477-5371 or TTY: 711.

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