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**HEALTH**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
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## LOW LEVEL DRINKING WATER PFAS RESULT AT VANDERBILT, BOYNE FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This summer the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) began an initiative to test drinking water from all community water systems and schools with well water for the manmade chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

It is not uncommon to find low levels of PFAS in drinking water supplies, as PFAS can be found in nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing, food wrappers, fire-fighting foams, stain repellants, and many other household products. They do not break down in the environment and move easily into water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set a lifetime health advisory level for two PFAS compounds in drinking water, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). The lifetime health advisory level is 70 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS combined, or individually if only one is present. Levels in water below the lifetime health advisory level are considered safe for all individuals to drink. The EPA has not set health advisory levels for other PFAS compounds. The State of Michigan is using 70 ppt as the standard for safe drinking water.

As part of the State's initiative, the water supplies of Vanderbilt Area School and Boyne Falls Public School were tested in September 2018. The results for Boyne Falls Public School were received on October 15, 2018, and show that for PFOA and PFOS combined, 7 parts per trillion were found in the water. For Vanderbilt Area School, the level of PFOA and PFOS combined were 3 parts per trillion. These levels are well below the EPA's lifetime health advisory of 70 parts per trillion and the health concern is considered to be low.

Even though water results were below the lifetime health advisory level, the water will be resampled to confirm the results. In the meantime, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan and the schools' administration are working closely with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to ensure the quality of the drinking water. We are also coordinating efforts with the Department of Environmental Quality's Remediation & Redevelopment Division (RRD) and Drinking Water & Municipal Assistance Division (DWMAD) to investigate the source of the PFAS.

Any questions regarding wells or drinking water at or around Vanderbilt Area School or Boyne Falls Public School should be directed to the health department's Environmental Health Division at 231-547-7651.

For health-related questions, contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-648-6942.

Additional information regarding PFAS can be found at:

<https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse> <https://wmv.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/overview.html>  
<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoaand-pfos>

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties.

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