



# City of Mansfield

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Law Director

**January 20, 2023**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Many of you already know that PFAS contamination is an issue across the country, and unfortunately Mansfield is no different. Today, however, we are pleased to announce that the City is taking the first step to hold the companies responsible for contamination at the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport accountable for their negligence.

The City Council has voted to hire counsel to pursue, on behalf of the city, a lawsuit against 3M, Chemours, DuPont, and several other companies for manufacturing products that they knew contained toxic chemicals that could easily spread through the environment and contaminate natural resources.

## **PFAS**

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”), including perfluorooctanoic acid (“PFOA”) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (“PFOS”), were discovered in the Air National Guard base, located on city-owned property at the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport, including but not limited to the groundwater, surface water, and soil.

PFOA and PFOS are toxic, man-made compounds that do not occur naturally in the environment. PFOA and PFOS have been used in many nonstick, stain-resistant, and waterproof products, such as aqueous film-forming foam (“AFFF”).

AFFF is a firefighting agent used to control and extinguish Class B fires. It is typically used at fire training centers, airports, and military bases, such as the Air National Guard base located at the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport. AFFF can be made without PFOA, PFOS, or their precursor chemicals.

When released into the environment, PFOA and PFOS are persistent, do not biodegrade, move readily through soil, surface water and groundwater, can bioaccumulate and biomagnify in animal tissue, including humans, fish and wildlife, and pose a significant risk to humans, animals, and the environment.

In light of emerging scientific evidence, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) has designated PFOS and PFOA as “contaminants of emerging concern.”

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According to the EPA, scientific research suggests that exposure to certain levels of PFAS, including PFOS and PFOA, may lead to adverse health outcomes, the full extent of which are still not yet known, including but not limited to: reproductive effects such as decreased fertility or increased high blood pressure in pregnant women; developmental effects or delays in children, including low birth weight, accelerated puberty, bone variations, or behavioral changes; increased risk of some cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers; reduced ability of the body's immune system to fight infections, including reduced vaccine response; interference with the body's natural hormones; and increased cholesterol levels and/or risk of obesity.<sup>1</sup>

Companies such as 3M, DuPont, Chemours, Tyco Fire Products, and Chemguard designed, manufactured, marketed, and sold these products knowing their use would cause toxic chemicals to be released into the environment and they did not notify consumers.

As the manufacturers and sellers of these harmful products, these companies owed a duty to all consumers, not to market a product which is unreasonably dangerous for its intended and foreseeable uses.

Their products did not perform as safely as an ordinary consumer would have expected them to perform when used in an intended or reasonably foreseeable way. These companies knew, or reasonably should have known, that their products are toxic, could not be contained, are persistent and do not readily degrade in the environment.

**What the City of Mansfield is doing:**

The City Council has taken steps to hire counsel to pursue, on behalf of the city, a lawsuit to seek compensation and damages for the investigation, remediation, removal, disposal, treatment, and monitoring of the ongoing PFAS contamination of the surface water, groundwater, and soil of the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport.

As direct result of their act and omissions, these companies have caused significant harm to the city and its residents. These companies are responsible for restoring to the city the enormous costs and expenses associated with redressing the injuries the city has suffered as a result of the ongoing PFAS contamination of the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport.

Christopher Brown  
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas>.

## **PFAS at the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport FAQ**

### **What are PFAS?**

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that include perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). PFOA and PFOS have been used in many nonstick, stain-resistant, and waterproof products, such as aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF). PFOA and PFOS are highly water soluble, which increases the rate at which they spread throughout the environment, contaminating soil, groundwater, and surface water. PFOA and PFOS are persistent in the environment and do not readily breakdown, which is why they are frequently referred to as “forever chemicals.”

### **What is AFFF?**

AFFF is a water-based firefighting agent used to control and extinguish Class B fuel fires and is used in many locations like military bases, airports, petroleum refineries, and fire training centers. When AFFF containing PFOA or PFOS is used, these chemicals can migrate through the surface water and soil into the groundwater. AFFF can be made without PFOA and PFOS.

### **PFAS at the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport.**

Even when these products are used as directed by the manufacturers, it allows PFAS to be released into the environment where they can enter the soil, groundwater, and surface water, thereby contaminating the environment and natural resources. In this case, PFAS have been discovered at the Air National Guard base, located on city-owned land at the Mansfield-Lahm Regional Airport.

### **What are the health risks associated with PFAS exposure?**

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, studies have shown exposure to certain levels of PFAS may lead to:

- Reproductive effects such as decreased fertility or increased high blood pressure in pregnant women.
- Developmental effects or delays in children, including low birth weight, accelerated puberty, bone variations, or behavioral changes.
- Increased risk of some cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers.
- Reduced ability of the body’s immune system to fight infections, including reduced vaccine response.
- Interference with the body’s natural hormones.
- Increased cholesterol levels and/or risk of obesity.

### **What is being done to address PFAS in the City of Mansfield?**

The City Council has voted to hire counsel to pursue, on behalf of the city, a lawsuit against the manufacturers of these chemicals and of the AFFF products that contain them. As the manufacturers and sellers of these harmful products, these companies owed a duty to all consumers, not to market a product which is unreasonably dangerous for its intended and foreseeable uses. The lawsuit will seek to hold these manufacturers responsible for potential damages the city may incur related to the investigation, remediation, removal, disposal, treatment, and monitoring of the ongoing PFAS contamination at the Airport.

### **Want more information on PFAS?**

- <https://www.epa.gov/pfas>
- <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>
- [Ohio Department of Health PFAS Fact Sheet](#)