

The Catalyst

Activating TN's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Office of Sustainable Practices



TN Department of Environment & Conservation

Understanding PFAS and the State of Tennessee's Response

Common Items with PFAS



Stain resistant products



Nonstick cookware



Takeout containers



Waterproof apparel



Furniture & textiles



Firefighting foam

Other Means of Exposure



Working in an industrial facility where PFAS chemicals were produced or used



Drinking contaminated municipal water or private well water



Eating fish caught from water contaminated by PFAS chemicals



Eating food that has been contaminated during growing, packaging, and/or processing



Accidentally swallowing contaminated soil or dust

[Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#) are a family of synthetic chemicals developed in the 1940s for

consumer and industrial purposes. Known for their ability to resist grease and water, PFAS are found in everyday items such as carpets, nonstick cookware, clothing, food packaging, and cosmetics. Beyond household products, these chemicals also play a vital role in manufacturing and industry.

Why are we concerned about PFAS?

They don't break down easily: PFAS are often called 'forever chemicals' because their strong carbon-fluorine bonds make them highly resistant to heat, water, and biological degradation. However, these same bonds also make it difficult for the body to break PFAS down once they enter through water, food, or air.

Accumulation can impact your health: Once in your body, PFAS bind to the proteins in your blood and tissue. Over time, this buildup can impact your health by interfering with normal biological functions, particularly in the liver, thyroid, and immune system.

[Learn more about how PFAS can affect your health.](#)

How is TDEC responding to PFAS?

TDEC is currently conducting a statewide effort to sample 29 different PFAS in raw, untreated water sources that supply public drinking water systems. Learn more about [TDEC's Statewide PFAS Sampling](#).

LEARN MORE ABOUT PFAS

No Trash November in Tennessee



This November, Tennesseans are uniting for the 5th annual [No Trash November](#), a statewide initiative by [TDOT's Nobody Trashes Tennessee](#) campaign. The goal is to remove 75,000 pounds of litter from our roads, parks, and waterways.

You can get involved by [joining a local cleanup](#) or [organizing your own](#). Volunteers of all ages are welcome, and youth groups can even earn exclusive patches. Keep Tennessee Beautiful affiliates, litter grantees, Adopt-A-Highway, River Groups, or Youth Groups that collect the most litter will compete for the coveted No Trash

November Trophy.

Track progress in real time with the [Trash Tracker](#) and share your efforts using [#NoTrashNovember](#) and [@NobodyTrashesTN](#) on social media.

America Recycles Day Events in Tennessee



K E E P A M E R I C A B E A U T I F U L[®]

Each year on November 15, [America Recycles Day](#) highlights the value of recycling, waste reduction, and buying recycled products. In Tennessee, communities respond with local events.

On November 15th, [Keep Knoxville Beautiful will host a hard-to-recycle collection event](#) at the University of Tennessee Office of Sustainability drop-off, collecting glass bottles, plastic film bags, small electronics, and more. On November 8th, the [Blount County Recycling Center will host a hard-to-recycle collection event](#) where a variety of items can be dropped off. When you drop off items, you can also tour the center to learn more about recycling.

You can also check out the [TN State Park event calendar](#) for an event near you, such as the [Fort Pillow State Park America Recycles Day Litter Cleanup](#) on November 15th, where recyclables will be separated and brought to the local recycling center.

Conserving Energy in Cooler Weather Months



As colder weather settles into Tennessee, many residents will be preparing to turn on the heat in their homes. Heating is one of the highest energy uses within a house, but there are ways to conserve energy and reduce your usage while keeping your costs lower. Changing your HVAC filter and lowering your thermostat are two simple steps to take action. Other steps like installing a programmable thermostat can make a big impact on reducing your energy use and pay for itself within a year. For more ideas or learn how you might get assistance with weatherization (reducing energy costs by reducing drafts), check out the TVA blog [The Current](#), or visit the [TN Housing Development Agency Weatherization Assistance Program](#).

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program



How can small businesses impact federal rulemaking?



It's important to make your voice heard during the federal rulemaking process, and that's exactly what writing a comment letter can do. When new regulations or rules are proposed, businesses can voice their concerns, provide feedback, and suggest improvements. Rules and regulations are posted in the [Federal Register](#). Once a proposed rule is published, the comment period is usually 30 to 60 days. Submit the comment letter as early as possible so agencies have longer to review the feedback before the rule gets finalized.

Feeling intimidated about writing a comment letter? The [U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy](#) has a great guide to writing them. Follow these tips from the Office of Advocacy on how you can write a more effective one!

- Understand the rule

- Be clear and concise
- Explain the impact on your business
- Offer solutions or alternatives
- Be professional and respectful

To report burdensome regulations and help shape smarter policy, use The Office of Advocacy's [Red Tape Hotline!](#)

Sustainable Recipe

Turn your Halloween pumpkins into [homemade pumpkin dog treats](#) with only three simple ingredients!

Need pumpkin puree for the recipe? [Learn how to make your own pumpkin puree.](#) You can even freeze the extra puree to use later in your Thanksgiving desserts.

If your pumpkin has already started to rot, compost it or search for a pumpkin compost drop-off/pick-up near you. When pumpkins and other organic materials end up in our Tennessee landfills, they take up valuable space and release methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.



News Articles

[Returning the Red-cockaded Woodpecker to Tennessee](#)

[Tennessee Solid Waste Task Force Takes First Step in Tackling Waste Issues](#)

Get Involved

Volunteer

[The Giving Grove Community Orchard](#)
Nashville

[Nobody Trashes Tennessee: No Trash November](#)
Statewide

Conferences

[Tennessee Local Food Summit](#)
Nashville
December 5-7

Events

[Voices Of Resilience](#)
Nashville
November 10

[Sustainability Professionals of Greater Chattanooga](#)
Chattanooga
November 14

[Urban Green Lab: Sustainability Roundtable](#)
Nashville
November 18

Receive Funding

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Law Enforcement Grant](#)

[TDOT Litter Grant Program](#)

[TDEC Grants and Programs](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)

[Grants.gov](#)

Stay Connected



[your preferences](#) |

using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward?

to receive our future emails.

[View this email](#)

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.