IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort – Townsend Bombing Range Drinking Water System, Detectable Levels of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

The health and well-being of our service members, their families, and civilian employees remains a high priority for us. Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort routinely monitors for the presence of drinking water contaminants. On April 10, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a final rule on drinking water standards for certain PFAS under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The rule establishes maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for several PFAS in drinking water, provides three years for regulated drinking water systems to begin monitoring and related public notifications, and five years for purveyors to install system improvements to comply with the new MCL levels. As a proactive approach and in anticipation of EPA's requirements, a Department of Defense (DoD) policy was issued on 11 July 2023 that required testing of all DoD-owned drinking water systems for PFAS by 31 December 2023. Samples from the Townsend Bombing Range (TBR) Drinking Water System were collected on 14 September 2023 and results were received on 5 October 2023. Those results reported concentrations of detected PFAS as listed in Table 1 below. TBR Drinking Water System provides drinking water to occupants located in the Townsend Bombing Range Complex only (See Figure 1).

In accordance with the 11 July 2023 DoD policy mentioned above, we are required to monitor drinking water for PFAS at a minimum of every two years and to notify the public of detectable PFAS in the drinking water supplied by DoD-owned drinking water systems. DoD policy also requires us to take action to provide alternative drinking water if the concentrations of Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) exceed 70 parts per trillion (ppt) (also expressed as nanograms per liter [ng/L]), individually or combined. PFOA and PFOS were not detected in the samples and are below both DoD action levels and EPA MCLs. The detected PFAS listed in Table 1 are also below DoD action levels and EPA MCLs.

Table 1: TBR Drinking Water System Finished Water PFAS Results

PFAS Analyte	Abbreviation	Result (ppt)	DoD Action Level (ppt)
Perfluorobutanoic Acid	PFBA	2.1	N/A (Result is also below EPA MCL)

What are Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and where do they come from?

PFAS are a group of thousands of man-made chemicals that have been used in a variety of industrial and consumer products around the world for decades. Due to their widespread use and environmental persistence, most people have been exposed to certain PFAS. They have been used to make coatings and products that are used as oil and water repellents in carpets, clothing, paper packaging for food, and cookware. They are also contained in some aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) used for fighting petroleum fires at airfields and for industrial fire suppression.

What does this mean?

Research is still ongoing to understand the mechanisms of PFAS toxicity. The risk of health effects associated with PFAS depends on exposure factors (dose, frequency, route, duration), individual factors (sensitivity and chronic disease burden), and other determinants of health. The epidemiological evidence suggests associations between increases in exposure to specific PFAS and certain health effects. For specific information about the health effects of PFAS exposure, please visit https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/.

Are there regulations for PFAS in drinking water?

As noted above, on April 10, 2024, the EPA announced a final rule on drinking water standards for certain PFAS under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The rule applies to all regulated drinking water purveyors, including Department of Defense (DoD). The rule establishes maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for several PFAS in drinking water, sets forth requirements to establish monitoring and notification requirements within three years, and provides five years for regulated drinking water purveyors to comply with the specified MCL levels. We are working to protect the drinking water on our installation and ensure compliance with EPA standards in advance of the deadline.

What is being done?

MCAS Beaufort will continue to monitor for PFAS in the treated drinking water for TBR Drinking Water System on a periodic basis as directed by DoD policy and take appropriate action, as required. Additionally, MCAS Beaufort in coordination with Marine Corps Installations Command and joint service partners will continue to evaluate the potential need for mitigation measures, as necessary. MCAS Beaufort will post sampling results of detected PFAS on the installation's public webpage at https://www.beaufort.marines.mil/Resources/Environmental/Water/. These efforts and required DOD timelines are in advance of EPA requirements noted in their recent regulations.

What can I do?

There is nothing you need to do, as there is no immediate risk to the general population. You may continue to use the water for all consumptive purposes (drinking, bathing, showering, cooking, dishwashing, and maintaining oral hygiene).

For more information, please visit https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained, or send inquiries to Chris Vaigneur at Christopher.vaigneur@usmc.mil, or call 843-228-7370.

This notice is being sent to you by MCAS Beaufort Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Office.

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Figure 1: Buildings served by TBR Drinking Water System