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Navy Validating Joint Base Long-term Water Monitoring Samples, Acting on Findings

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – The Navy is working with the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) to review the first month of long-term-monitoring (LTM) drinking water sampling results at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) to ensure that water in the Navy distribution system remains safe to drink.

Under an interagency-approved flushing and sampling plan, the Navy water system is now in a two-year period of LTM. This includes testing about 6,000 more samples from roughly 55% of residences and other facilities on the system for more than 60 different contaminants.

“Our actions are focused on the health and safety of our people and our community – that is my highest priority,” said Rear Adm. Tim Kott, commander, Navy Region Hawaii. “By conducting long-term monitoring efforts, we are ensuring that our water remains safe. We have been able to make great progress thanks to the collaboration and hard work with many partners, and with the help of our community. We appreciate the continued working relationship with the Hawaii Department of Health as we review sampling results and act on any findings.”

Under the plan, the Navy is sampling 5% of homes and other buildings in each zone of the Navy water system for the first three months after the DOH amended that zone’s health advisory (a total of 15% in each zone after three months). After that, 40% of all homes and other buildings on the system will be sampled over the following 21 months. All schools, child development, and medical centers will be sampled regularly during both phases of the plan.

Sampling locations for homes in each zone are chosen as a geographic representation of the zone, based on their location on the neighborhood distribution system. Different homes will be chosen during each phase to provide a good geographic spatial representation of homes sampled.

A Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Hawaii representative contacts residents of homes selected for sampling to schedule an appointment at the resident’s earliest

convenience. The sampling process takes about an hour.

When the sample team arrives at the home, they explain the long-term monitoring process and answer any questions, then proceed to the sampling faucet, typically the one highest and farthest from where water enters the home. The sample team takes several field measurements to account for some general conditions in the home. The team collects four one-liter bottles for lab analysis on the mainland.

It typically takes two to three weeks for final results. All results are validated to state and federal drinking water requirements, including the incident-specific parameters (ISPs) set by the DOH for the Navy water system.

Validated testing results will be posted to the Safe Waters website at: <https://jbphh-safewaters.org>.

Sample results are generally categorized as non-detect, detect, or exceed. If a sample exceeds action levels for contaminants, the resident or building point of contact will be personally notified.

“This is a very large undertaking, and my staff and I remain committed to conducting this effort in coordination with the DOH to ensure that we are continually providing safe drinking water for all users of our water system,” said Capt. Gordie Meyer, commanding officer of NAVFAC Hawaii. “We will immediately act on any validated sampling exceedances, coordinating with the DOH to determine the best course of action. We will continue to meet the incident-specific parameters -- which are more health-protective than drinking water regulated standard levels -- that are in place to verify that the water in our system remains safe for all uses.”

“The added level of safety that these ISPs offer also means that we may be working with our residents and tenants to conduct follow-up sampling and remedial actions,” added Meyer. “I regret that this may cause some additional disruption, but we are committed to doing this right and restoring trust in the Navy water system from the Navy’s Waiawa well, which is routinely monitored to ensure our water source and distribution system is safely providing water to our consumers. We will continue to work with regulators and our partners at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure that water from the Navy water system remains safe for all uses.”

For more information on these actions, go to the news section of <http://www.navy.mil/jointbasewater>.

For more information on long-term monitoring of the Navy water system, go to <https://jbphh-safewaters.org>.