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Drinking Water Remains Safe after Red Hill Leak Reported

Laboratory test results indicate no fuel in drinking water

PEARL HARBOR - Results of laboratory tests indicate that City and Navy drinking water sources continue to meet federal regulatory Safe Drinking Water and State of Hawaii standards, and the water is safe to drink.

Officials of the State Department of Health and the Navy are continuing to work closely to ensure the drinking water remains safe. Among their efforts is drawing up a comprehensive monitoring plan to ensure long-term safety. Meanwhile, water samples are being drawn frequently to detect any presence or movement of contaminants.

Test results from five drinking water wells in the vicinity taken by the Honolulu Board of Water Supply (HBWS) have shown no fuel contamination. HBWS is moving forward with its own monitoring plan of the drinking water that has been approved by the State Department of Health. On confirmation of the test results showing no fuel contamination, the HBWS drinking water wells that were shut down as a precaution are being brought back into service as of today.

Laboratory tests were conducted on water samples taken from various wells in the area since a possible leak was detected on Jan. 13 by operators at the 70-year-old fuel storage facility. Best evidence indicates no more than 20,000 gallons - and possibly much less -- of jet fuel leaked last week from one of the 20 large-capacity tanks at Red Hill.

Tests on initial water samples taken after the possible leak was discovered showed no presence of fuel in drinking water wells. Test results on samples taken since then are pending, and accelerated sampling is continuing.

Draining of the fuel tank was completed Saturday morning. Now it must be vented, a process that could take several weeks, before workers can enter it to try to find the source of the leak.

The Red Hill facility was built between 1940 and 1943. Each of its 20 cylindrical tanks is 250 feet tall and 100 feet in diameter. Each can hold up to 12.5 million gallons of fuel. For more than 70 years, the Red Hill fuels facility has been a national strategic asset. Red Hill continues to provide secure fuel storage for ships and aircraft of U.S. Pacific Fleet and other military branches.