



JOINT BASE WATER DAILY UPDATE

Joint Information Center

(808) 471-5013

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[3/18/2022]

00:00:07 - 00:00:43

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the daily water update for March 18. I'm Capt. Darren Guenther, chief of staff for Navy Region, Hawaii. We've seen lots of progress over the last month as our zones and our map turns green, and many of you have returned to your homes or returned to using the water after your neighborhoods were declared safe by the Hawaii Department of Health. I said this yesterday, and I'd like to say it again, thank you for your patience as we worked through this process.

00:00:44 - 00:01:18

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

As for the last four zones, I'd like to announce that we just received the letters from the Hawaii Department of Health certifying zones, D3, C1, C2 and C3, as water safe for all uses. We're very excited about that. And I'd like to thank those experts at the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Hawaii Department of Health for their important role in recertifying, and restoring our water.

00:01:19 - 00:01:59

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

It's been over a month since zone A1, that's Pearl City peninsula, first had its water advisory amended, and that water certified. And so today, we'd like to give you a review of the process that was used to get us to that point. So what we're going to do is bring Chris Waldron back on. He's a professional environmental engineer with the Navy Marine Corps Public Health Center and he's a member of the Interagency Drinking Water Team. And he's going to walk us through that process. Before we do that, though, let's take a look at our map.

00:02:00 - 00:02:40

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

So the first thing I should say about this map is that with the news that we just received, it's out of date. So we still have some hatched green on this depiction. But as I just announced, we're very happy to hear that the Hawaii Department of Health has certified the last four zones on the Navy water system as water safe for all uses. That brings us up to 100% in all green, which is quite a milestone that we've achieved over really four months of really hard work. Thank you again for your efforts in getting us to this point.

00:02:41 - 00:03:21

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

So with that, specifically for those four zones, for the other zones, and all those neighborhoods that move-in is complete, but for those four zones encompassing the neighborhoods of Earhart. Let's see Hale Alii, Marine barracks and Hospital Point, you'll be set to receive more information today on how that move-in process and benefits



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process is going to take place. So with that, though, look for a new updated map with the updates that we just announced. And that'll be that for the map for today.

00:03:22 - 00:03:58

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Now, what I'd like to do is bring in Mr. Chris Waldron. So a lot of work has been accomplished in restoring this water and the team that he was on, which is the Interagency Drinking Water Team was a large part of that. In addition to of course, the Hawaii Department of Health, who played a key role as partners in certifying the water for our community for you. And so, Chris, thank you for being here. Chris is going to walk us through the process that was used. So thanks for coming back.

00:03:59 - 00:03:59

CHRIS WALDRON

Great to be here. Great to see you again,

00:04:00 - 00:04:06

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Chris, so can you remind us first of all, who makes up that Interagency Drinking Water Team? What agencies are on that?

00:04:07 - 00:04:39

CHRIS WALDRON

Sure. So the Interagency Drinking Water Systems Team is comprised of representatives from the Department Health, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, from the Army and from the Navy. It really consists of experts in each one of those organizations and dealing with emergency response, drinking water, environmental crises, that type of thing. So it's a it's really an experienced team with a lot of expertise in this area. And I'm really proud to be a part of that team and be a member of it, and the work that we've done.

00:04:40 - 00:04:49

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

It's great to hear, can you give us a sort of a quick review of the actions that ultimately lead to the Department of Health's modification of their advisory in this zone?

00:04:50 - 00:05:37

CHRIS WALDRON

So it's a very, very deliberate approach, step by step approach. First, we developed a plan that plan was developed through with all the members of the team. And so that was a flushing plan. Each step in the plan is followed by sampling, where we collect data to make a determination with regard to the next step in the process. So, for



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example, we had flushing, we collect samples from hydrants to make a determination about each zone. Once that met criteria, we then moved on to our individual residents flushing, followed by sampling of a subset of those locations, as well as sampling with CDCs, and schools and other structures.

00:05:38 - 00:06:01

CHRIS WALDRON

But at each step of the process, the actual data determined the next step. And so we would get together and meet. And we met on a daily basis to meet and discuss the data, what it meant, what we saw, if there were any anomalies in the data, or things that we needed to kind of work out, resample, re-flush, all those types of things, very deliberate, systematic process.

00:06:02 - 00:06:14

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Okay. And then once those processes were complete, what sort of information and data was actually forwarded from the Interagency Drinking Water Team, that you're a part of to the Department of Health for their final decision,

00:06:15 - 00:06:49

CHRIS WALDRON

So we put together what we call remedial action reports, which was a document that encompassed everything that had been done. So it included the analytical data that I was talking about the testing results, included documentation on the flushing, included documentation on the actual structure of the distribution system, valves, backflow, preventers, those types of things, incorporated complaints, complaint logs, we call those heat maps, basically areas where people may have phoned in and had a comment about their water quality, and so on and so forth.

00:06:50 - 00:07:09

CHRIS WALDRON

And so it's really, and I know, I've been here before, and use the term a holistic and integrated approach, but it's not just a single line of evidence, we're looking across the board to try to bring all of that data together, and present that to the Department of Health. So that again, it's a recommendation. Ultimately, they make the decision, as we heard today, which is good news.

00:07:10 - 00:07:24

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Yeah. So some residents would say, hey, this process took a long time. Why did it take so long? I take it, takes time to go through all of this information, all that data would that be the reason?



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CHRIS WALDRON

Yeah, exactly. And I would say, you know, one of the things that is the overarching mandate of our group was protection of human health and the environment. And we had to get it right. And in order to do so it takes time, you have to get the correct data, you have to put eyes on it, incorporate all these other lines of evidence, as I mentioned. And so it's not a rapid process, even though we'd like it to go quicker. The main thing is to get it right and to get it right takes a little bit of time. Although I think we did things pretty quickly with relatively speaking, at the end of the day, we recognize that for the Sailors and soldiers and families that were impacted by this, you know, anytime is too long, and we appreciate that, but, you know, our efforts were single mindedly to make sure that we got people back into their homes safely, but as quickly as we could.

00:08:20 - 00:08:36

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

So the other school of thought that some might have is that this was rushed, that we didn't take enough time. Can you talk about the balance between those two strands of thought, did we work too slow? Or we work too fast? What was the right balance? And did you did the team find it?

00:08:37 - 00:09:27

CHRIS WALDRON

I think we did. I mean, and part of that balance is having an integrated team with representatives from DOH and EPA and the Army, Navy, and working that. And so we were constantly in a discussion about do we have enough data? Do we have enough information to be able to move forward? And so with that, there's always going to be a criticism, and somewhat rightly so right. It's too fast or too slow? Our focus really was mostly on making sure that we got it correct. We tried to set aside the schedule part of it as much as we could, and focus on the data and let that drive the process. Not, you know, hey, we had a pre ordained we needed to get, you know, people into a house at a certain date that is contrary to our entire process, all focused on human health, safety and the data to actually lead us to the conclusions that we had.

00:09:28 - 00:09:40

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

So now that we're here, what what does it actually mean, when the State Department of Health amends their advisory on the drinking water? What does that mean to us and our residents?

00:09:41 - 00:10:18

CHRIS WALDRON



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Well, it means return to more normal life, right? And water is key to everything that we do. It's a vital part of our existence. And so not having drinking water that you can use in your house is a huge, huge inconvenience. And you mentioned that earlier about appreciation of everyone's patience with that. And we recognize that from the start. What the amendment of the Health Advisory means is that the water has been identified as being safe for all uses. So you can return to normal use of the water in your home for all purposes, drinking, washing clothes, for your pets, everything.

00:10:19 - 00:11:02

CHRIS WALDRON

But I would say that one of the elements of this is that we're not done. You know, there's an important element, which is the long term monitoring, and we've talked about that before when I've been in is that this is the first stage, right. We've done a lot of work to get where we are, but we're not finished, we're going to keep an eye on this. And part of that is to just ensure while we don't expect that there'll be changes in water quality, that we're confident, we know that we need to restore consumer confidence in the water. And in order to do so we'd need to continue to sample and continue to stay engaged. And in fact, this week, we've been spending almost all of our time talking about what are the follow on actions, you know, that are part of that? And how do we implement those in the best way possible?

00:11:03 - 00:11:22

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Yeah, not just an important resource, just a critical, essential resource, not only for our families, but our entire community here on Oahu. So important. So finally, can you talk about what you believe the most important things are for our families that are returning to using their water or moving back in?

00:11:23 - 00:12:02

CHRIS WALDRON

Yeah. First thing I think is really important as you return to your house, is to flush your tabs. And we talked a little bit about that I think I was here a week ago or so it's important to run your tabs in your house hot and cold, you know, 15, 20 minutes, something like that, to kind of replace the water. If the water sat there for a while, it's probably been a period of time, if you're not in your or haven't been in your home, since we sampled in the homes that will replace that water with more of the fresh chlorinated water. And we talked about stagnation, that you lose that chlorine content over time. So that's probably the first thing to be aware of and to do as you move into your house.

00:12:03 - 00:12:59

CHRIS WALDRON



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Other than that, is really being to return to normal use. However, if you see something if you think that, you know, that you might smell something or an odor, we have the Rapid Response Team that we've specifically stood up to be able to, obviously rapidly respond to those questions and concerns. We think that's a really an integral part to the response. And that is to, again, restoring confidence for folks who have questions and concerns. And we recognize that people are going to be a little bit cautious coming back to their house. And that team will come out. And we can obviously walk through what's going on what we might see if it's an odor or sheen or whatnot. And we expect to see some from bacteria and other things potentially. But the Rapid Response Team takes all of those very seriously. And I think it's a really important part to restoring confidence in the drinking water.

00:13:00 - 00:13:29

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

That's great. So for residents, again, if you have any concerns whatsoever, with your water, please call our Emergency Operations Center. They are in the linkage that Rapid Response Team who's going to serve you to your location and take care of you. So Chris, thank you so much for coming on. I appreciate all the service that you've given to this community over the last really four months, you've been here for a good chunk of this time from from your home on the mainland. And so thank you for your service to our community.

00:13:30 - 00:14:04

CHRIS WALDRON

I really appreciate it. And I would say appreciate all the the work that the members of the Interagency Drinking Water System Team has done. DOH, EPA, Army, Navy, as well as all the folks that aren't necessarily in the room on a daily basis. It's been a huge effort by everyone. But fundamentally it's for the people, the people affected and appreciate their patience as we've worked through this process. We're not done. We're still engaged, we're still working forward. And it's an important part of being a member of the community and being proud to serve. So I appreciate that.

00:14:05 - 00:15:21

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Thanks, Chris appreciate it. So that's your daily water update for today. We're going to do this Monday, same time, you can expect to see more information if you're in one of those final neighborhoods, today and into the weekend. And we'll be here to support you as you move in over the next several days and return to drinking your water. We're monitoring your questions on Facebook, and you can email those questions to CNRHPO@gmail.com. Don't forget to check out our water info website that's navy.mil/jointbasewater and check out the water data. We have results from all of the different neighborhoods every single one is on our data page at JBPHH-safewaters.org.



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And with the weekend coming up please don't forget to check out the good stuff at greatlifehawaii.com/wegotyou. Please remember, we're all in this together as one community and ohana. Stay safe. Take care of yourself, take care of each other, and we'll see you next time.