



JOINT BASE WATER UPDATE

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[4/26/2022]

00:00:07 - 00:01:28

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Hello everyone and welcome to the water update for April 26th. I'm Captain Darren Guenther, chief of staff for Navy Region Hawaii. The work to restore and ensure the quality of your water is about to go into its sixth month. This has been a long process, but we continue to do whatever it takes to ensure that your water is safe. It's important for us along the way to keep you informed on our efforts, not only through our Facebook Live updates like this one, but also on our Web pages and through press releases. So, I'd ask you to continue to look out for those. We've reached a milestone in our long-term monitoring and testing program. And so today we're going to have Mr. Chris Waldron on to talk about that. He's a professional environmental engineer with the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. He's going to talk about the month one, long term monitoring and testing results and what they mean and what they're seeing. First, though, let's go to our map and talk about that. So, for your map update, you can see it here to my left, to your right.

00:01:29 - 00:02:38

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

All areas remain green, signifying that the Hawaii Department of Health has certified the water in those areas as safe for all uses and safe to drink. That includes all 19 zones as we have them laid out. That includes all 24 neighborhoods and 9715 homes, if you're on the Navy's water distribution system, they all remain green and the water is safe for all users. Okay. Now what I'd like to do is go to our guest. So, I mentioned that we've hit a milestone with our long term monitoring and testing program, and that milestone is that we've completed month one of that program, which is about 804 samples that the teams across the entire Navy water system have taken samples of. And we've gotten those results back. And so I'd like to bring Mr. Chris Waldron in. He's one of our experts with the Navy Marine Corps Public Health Center to talk about that. So, Chris, welcome in, thanks for coming on."

00:02:38 - 00:02:42

CHRIS WALDRON

Hey, great to be with you again Captain.



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00:02:43 - 00:02:53

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Hey, thank you. So, we've just recently completed the month one long-term monitoring. And the first question I have is, what have you seen."

00:02:56 - 00:04:27

CHRIS WALDRON

You know, we've seen results that are consistent with the initial phase within the emergency response, which means that we really haven't seen much in the way of detection in the long-term monitoring samples, which is great news. The results have come back, zone by zone, basically clean I mean that we haven't seen any detections in those that are above Hawaii Department of Health screening levels and so we have seen no indication of any petroleum contamination or other contamination in the water. So, it's been consistent with what we saw during the first phase of the investigation. We've seen a few instances and a very few instances where we've seen lead in some of the water samples at very specific locations. However, those are indicative of premise plumbing issues and not of overall drinking water quality within the distribution system. And so that's you know, that's something that we would expect in looking at a system of this significance, meaning the number of homes and the number of... different connections that we have of almost 10,000 homes and and structures that we might have if you premise plumbing type detections. But the results have been consistent, which is good. That's what we want. We want them to be good, clean results, and that's what we've got through the rigorous testing."

00:04:28 - 00:04:41

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Okay. So I've got some follow on questions and some specifics for, for the items you mentioned, but you know, overall, what does this mean? What do you take away from, you know, this first month of long term monitoring test results?"

00:04:42 - 00:05:59

CHRIS WALDRON

Yeah, the Take-Home message is, is that the water, the joint base, Pearl Harbor-Hickam Water System, that water is clean, good and great for all uses. So, I mean, that's really the fundamental Take-Home message is that we've collected thousands of samples. We followed up with our first month of long-term monitoring sampling, which



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was another almost 1000 samples. Those results have been consistently have met DOH screening level criteria for the most part are not detecting, you know, we're not seeing anything in the water. We've had, like I said, a couple of locations where we've had lead or premise plumbing type issues, but that's not indicative of the water distribution system. It's more indicative of older plumbing or a fixture within a building and we've taken actions to replace those fixtures that have happened. But it's only been a handful of locations. So, the... end result is really good news. It's what we expected with the rigorous action that we took to remediate the system and flush the system. And the confirmation sampling is just supporting with actual hard data as we go along.

00:06:00 - 00:06:39

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

You mentioned you know, overall your feelings on the results, but you also mentioned that you've had a handful of... instances out there of exceedances that you attributed to premise plumbing. Can you tell us how how would we're looking at 9700 homes, how do those, do the results that we've seen from this first month, how would they compare to, say, 9700 homes elsewhere, whether it was on the mainland or somewhere else here in Hawaii?" Would it be similar? Could you expect to see similar results with a few blips here and there?"

00:06:40 - 00:08:38

CHRIS WALDRON

Yeah, I mean, certainly this was a unique situation with the fuel release. So it's hard to make comparisons, direct comparisons and the response has been significant and unique in terms of the the thoroughness and the rigor to which the number of samples we've collected, which are unlike probably any other water project that I've worked on and probably in the United States on the mainland or outside of the mainland United States, That being said, you would if you're going to sample 10,000 homes, you would expect to have an occasional here or there type exceedances of lead or copper or some of the other things that were commonly used in older plumbing fixtures or infrastructure. Now we've gone away from that as as you know, into more modern plumbing with Pex, Pex pipe and other plastic pipes. Gone away from kind of the lead solder that was historically used. But in older fixtures and older water distribution systems in some areas, of that of this network or older, we would expect to kind of see those those type of things and you'd see those in the mainland as well. That's one of the reasons why on the mainland or as part of just standard water quality monitoring, you know, we monitor



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for lead and copper some of these other chemicals and analytes that we monitor monitored for at Pearl Harbor-Hickam as well. And so this is consistent with what we would see pretty much anywhere in terms of an occasional exceedance here or there. And certainly it's based on the age of the infrastructure. As I said, you know, in older buildings, older locations, you may have a higher frequency of lead type issues, but we're not seeing that here because we have a kind of a mixture of old and new. And so nothing that's really unusual in terms of what we've seen from a water quality standpoint.

00:08:39 - 00:09:08

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Some people have asked about the number of tests that we're doing across our water system. My next question is, you know, based on what I believe was 804 full drinking water samples that were sent out for test in month one of the long-term monitoring and testing, how does that compare to a similarly sized 9715 homes elsewhere, whether it was on the mainland or elsewhere in Hawaii?" How many? So, the test program that the Navy went through was 804 tests last month alone. How many tests say does that many number of homes get somewhere else?"

00:09:23 - 00:11:33:

CHRIS WALDRON

Yeah, it's hard to make a, just a direct comparison just because of the uniqueness of the fuel release that happened in November of last year. And so that caused or resulted in a very unique response and a very rigorous response. In general, you wouldn't see anywhere near the number of samples that we've collected as part of the response to the fuel release at the Red Hill Well. And so the Navy and the Army Department of Defense, in conjunction with the partners at the EPA and the Department of Health's State of Hawaii, Department of Health, we had to implement a response that was commensurate with the release and so there's significantly more samples. I mean, you really couldn't compare the numbers at all because you wouldn't see any anywhere near the number of samples that we've collected here as part of a traditional drinking water quality monitoring system. Those types of samples are usually only collected along distribution mains, and we're talking about compliance type samples where there hasn't been a release. There would and that would be based on the size of the system, but it would probably be on the order of less than 100 total samples. You know, periodically, you know, once a year or depending on what the frequency of testing."



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However, if there was a release or some other water quality concern, that would be increased but unlikely to see another site that would have the same number of samples that have been collected as what we've done here at Pearl. But in addition to that, you know, as we've talked about on previous Facebook lives, you know, there's the long-term monitoring part of this where, again, in order to, you know, restore consumer confidence in the system, we're continuing to monitor and keep an eye on water quality to demonstrate and continue to demonstrate that the quality of water because protection of human health is you know, that's our objective. You know, at the end of the day, we've got to make sure that this water safe to drink and for all uses. And so we implemented a program that kind of goes above and beyond what you would see elsewhere in order to restore that public and consumer confidence.

00:11:35 - 00:11:47

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

You mentioned that there were a handful of exceedances. Were any of those exceedances related or attributed to the fuel spill that occurred?"

00:11:47 – 00:13:28

CHRIS WALDRON

No, not at all. The exceedances that we've seen have been isolated to specific fixtures. We've had a couple of schools that have had a single sample within the school that had um a lead exceedance. And it's important because it's a sensitive population and we're very aware of that. And in fact, as part of our program we're sampling schools and Child Development Centers every time we're out there doing our long-term monitoring program. So, for example, in some of the a couple of schools, we typically collect about five samples. And in a couple of instances, we had a detection of lead and one of the five samples so isolated to a specific fixture within the school. And then we replaced the fixture and resample and demonstrated that it's not the water coming in. So none of these are related to petroleum or petroleum releases. They couldn't have caused it. And certainly, based on the information the site just shared with you, for example, within a school only having a single fixture being impacted isn't indicative of anything that would have been released into the water. So that's I mean, that's good news. That's bad news, obviously, with the fixture. But part of the good news is, is that we're out monitoring it, testing these things and as part of the program. And so that again, continues to reinforce the fact that the water is safe. The new water that we've got from the Waiawa



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shaft where all of the water comes from, now, to no longer comes from Red Hill is safe and acceptable for all uses."

00:13:29 - 00:13:45

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Of course, that leads this into a question from one of our viewers that we got last week. And that question is, why are we seeing lead in a few of our results from some of our facilities? And by extension, should we be concerned? And what's the fix there?"

00:13:47 00:15:15

CHRIS WALDRON

So, as I mentioned, we are going to see if you sample in buildings or structures, you're going to see a certain amount of exceedances of lead, usually pretty low amount, but it depends on the age of the buildings, age of the faucets, the infrastructure that you use. You might see a few exceedances of lead. So, I don't think this is unusual by any stretch of the imagination. Based on experience, based on data, and just the fact that you know, with some of our infrastructure, I would say that the what I would recommend that folks focus on is that it's it is it's always a concern when we find lead. It's just not that it's widespread. And that's the that's the good news, right? It's good news and somewhat bad news type message. Like you don't want to just detect lead in any of the samples. But in the same sense, we are testing for it. We are we do have a rigorous testing program. And so that has discovered a few locations and we're able to then take the proper action to remove those fixtures and and put in a new fixture, flush and test and make sure that that's not an issue. So, it's not a surprise. I don't think it's anything to be concerned about. I also think that it's you should take stock in the fact that we are testing and testing at a significant number of locations and especially at every school at CDC that we're looking at these things over and over again to again to confirm that that drinking water is safe."

00:15:17 - 00:15:26

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

Okay, Chris, that's really good information. I really appreciate it. And I really appreciate your support to our Hawai'i community here. So, thank you."



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00:15:26 – 00:16:00

CHRIS WALDRON

Yeah. I mean, again, the health and welfare of the sailors and soldiers and their families and the folks that are out there are paramount. We are still engaged in this in terms of our active monitoring and significant number of samples and evaluation. Appreciate everybody's patience as we've worked through this, as you said, for six months. And we're going to continue to do that to ensure the health and safety of everyone and great, safe, safe drinking water throughout the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Water Distribution Network. So, thank you for your time.

00:16:00 - 00:16:02

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

All right. Thanks, Chris. We'll have you back again.

00:16:02 - 00:16:03

CHRIS WALDRON

Okay. Thank you.

00:16:04 - 00:16:52

CAPT. DARREN GUENTHER

That was your water update for today. Please join us on Thursday this week. Same time, we're monitoring your questions. On Facebook. And you can also email those questions to us at cnrhpa@gmail.com. Don't forget to check the water info website at navy.mil/jointbasewater. And check out the latest water data at jbphh-safewaters.org. And make sure to check out the good stuff at greatlifehawaii.com/wegotyou 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.