



## JOINT BASE WATER DAILY UPDATE

Joint Information Center

(808) 471-5013

[www.navy.mil/jointbasewater](http://www.navy.mil/jointbasewater)

[1/13/2022]

00:00:08:26 - 00:00:28:26

CAPT GUENTHER

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the daily water update for January the 13th, I'm Captain Darren Guenther, chief of staff for Navy region, Hawaii. Yesterday, we focused on the residents' resources guide. It was produced by the interagency team, including the Hawaii Department of Health and the Environmental Protection Agency.

00:00:29:23 - 00:01:11:19

CAPT GUENTHER

If you haven't had a chance to look at it, you can pull it down off our water resources website. [navy.mil/jointbasewater](http://navy.mil/jointbasewater). We'd like to talk more today about benefits, and so our guest will be Ms. Mary Opitz. She is the managing attorney for the Department of the Navy's Personnel Claims Unit. She'll be joining us virtually, but before I bring her on, let's give you an update on our flushing progress. This chart, again, is updated and posted on our water update website, [navy.mil/jointbasewater](http://navy.mil/jointbasewater).

00:01:12:01 - 00:01:30:05

CAPT GUENTHER

So first of all, we've hit sort of a milestone in that you can see that there are none of these sand colorations on our map today, indicating that we have completed our system flush. Our planed system flushes across the Joint Base Water System.

00:01:30:13 - 00:03:27:15

CAPT GUENTHER

So last night, Aliamanu neighborhood, which was the last one, completed their system flush and they are moving into sampling. And so similarly, we have a lot of our neighborhoods and zones, designated zones which have moved into that awaiting sample results phase. So, a lot of samples at our certified labs on the mainland currently. And so, we're waiting for a lot of those results to come back. For home flush we have a bunch of neighborhoods since that's really the next phase that we're going to be focusing on here in the next couple of weeks.

We have several neighborhoods undergoing that right now and several coming up that we'll talk about. So Redhill still has a few homes that they're going to be working through. Their flush today should be complete today, and the Redhill School is getting flushed later this afternoon to ensure that they are 100% across the board in Redhill. Hale Na Koa, Onizuka and Officer Field. That's a pretty large area out of 1577 homes. We have only 18 homes remaining. Our focus there on flushing is turning to flushing the various facilities. There's a lot of facilities over there where people work and we're going through those. There are several hundred. That's the focus here over the next couple of days there to complete that the CDC and school in that zone are complete. For Ford Island. We have completed 409 of the 411 homes. And again, moving towards a focus on the facilities there. There are a number of facilities over there and will be moving through those



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over the next day into the CDC on Ford Island has been flushed. And so, we're looking at a couple of starts now for the home flushing phase.

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CAPT GUENTHER

For Moanalua, that's our NEX area, the Interagency Drinking Water Team is currently reviewing the results as we speak. And once they make their conclusions, then we'll be moving to the next phase. So, we're hopeful that that will start this afternoon, but we're waiting to hear from the Interagency Drinking Water Team on their conclusions before we're allowed to move on and move forward. And Earhart Field the note about Earhart Field, the draft schedule is to start home flushing on the 15th. We have not received the results from the lab just yet to give our interagency drinking water team the ability to review those results. We're hopeful to get them this afternoon, sort of close of business on the mainland time, and we'll have more information on whether that timetable is going to stay as scheduled or whether it may move to the right. Due to the results and the timeline and when we'll have an opportunity to review those results. So those are the home flush currently and home flush sort of starts coming up in the next couple of days.

00:04:40:10 - 00:05:43:02

CAPT GUENTHER

Of course, we have several neighborhoods, three in particular awaiting their test results from the home sampling. That's Pearl City Peninsula, that is Hale Moku and that's Hokulani. Those test results, we haven't gotten all the test results back and we're awaiting those before the drinking water systems team sits down. And then Department of Health and EPA separately, will also have a chance to sit down independently and go through those results before we come around in the process where the Department of Health certifies that water in that area is safe to drink. So, we're still in that zone awaiting results, and we're looking forward to that. So that is our map update for today. OK, what I'd like to do now is bring in our guest is Ms. Mary Opitz. She is in the Personnel Claims Unit in Washington, DC.

00:05:43:03 - 00:06:04:00

CAPT GUENTHER

Coincidentally, she has been out here from D.C. helping us through this, helping us to stand up our claims process in storefront and flew back just yesterday, but we're able to have her on virtually to discuss how families who are suffered damages to personal property or whatnot can seek those claims.

00:06:04:22 - 00:06:49:02

CAPT GUENTHER

So welcome, Mary, are you out there?



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MARRY OPITZ

Thank you. Yes, I am. How are you doing?

CAPT GUENTHER

OK, we may have lost her, we had her on just a few minutes ago when we're talking about.

Mary, are you up?

MARRY OPITZ

I am up.

CAPT GUENTHER

OK, if you're up switch the mic now, ok now I can hear you.

MARRY OPITZ

All right.

CAPT GUENTHER

We're talking about claims today and the first question I have is, you know, there's a difference between lodging and meals, benefits and claims, I believe, and I wonder if you can draw that distinction, first and foremost? So, people understand that piece of it that they may not have thought about before, but may have access to.

00:07:04:28 - 00:07:38:08

MARRY OPITZ

Certainly, there has been a little bit of confusion and kind of trying to lump it all together, and there is a big difference. They are separate and distinct. TLA is the Temporary Lodging Assistance. And that's really the lodging and meals and incidentals that are being paid out to families who have been displaced because of the water situation, claims and personnel claims what our unit handles are those personal property situations where there's been personal property damage to household items, things that have been irreparably damaged by this water situation. So very separate, distinct and apart from TLA situation of what our property claims are.

00:07:38:22 - 00:07:58:22

CAPT GUENTHER

OK, great. Thank you for the distinction. And I know it's important that, you know, folks know sort of where to go and how to put a claim in versus apply for benefits on the lodging and meals piece, I think. I think we're getting to the point where our folks understand that lodging and meals piece.



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CAPT GUENTHER

But the claims, it'll be good to hear and understand that piece for us. So where do we go for guidance and information on the claims portion of this?

00:08:16:19 - 00:09:20:06

MARY OPITZ

All right. Well, we have tried to simplify this. I know people have been under a lot of stress and strain, and we have tried to make this into the most simple process as possible. So, they are still able to go to the EFAC in person if they would like to meet with someone, but with the COVID considerations, we have tried to make a very safe process so that they can go online and they can go to the Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam website, and there's a blue ribbon that goes across that talks about the water questions and resources. And if they click on that and scroll down a good ways because there's a lot of great information there that isn't just claims, but they will come to a header and title claims and under that, they will have information readily available at their fingertips for both military or service members, as well as civilians who have been affected. And there will be links that they can click there that will take them directly to our website, and we'll be talking about that website and how to file the claim in just a minute. But that resource is a quick, easy click and you don't have to be in a crowd and you can do it from the comfort of your own home, and you can do it any time of the day or night that is convenient for you.

00:09:21:14 - 00:09:38:05

CAPT GUENTHER

OK and so who are we speaking to here in the sense that who can file a claim?

00:09:38:05 - 00:10:17:00

MARY OPITZ

All right, our military service members and our civilians, anybody who has been serviced by the Navy water and negatively impacted in this situation. So, we originally had under the PCA that just by Congress was established to handle our service members, but we wanted to help, of course, all the civilians who have been affected. So, we have created a mirror process to that process under PCA so that both our service members and our civilians, if they have personal property items that have been irreparably damaged due to this water contact, that they have a way that they and access to funds to help them out. So, service members and civilians.

00:10:17:24 - 00:10:36:27

CAPT GUENTHER

OK, that's good to know. So, service members and civilians who've been on the Navy water and affected Can file that claim?



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MARY OPITZ

Yes.

CAPT GUENTHER

OK, that's great. So, the next obvious question how does you file a claim?

MARY OPITZ

All right. Again, you do have the opportunity if you would like to go in person to the EFAC center or for those who live off base, you've been provided with a phone number that you can call and make an appointment, but probably the safest and most convenient way is to go online.

00:10:36:27 - 00:10:50:21

MARY OPITZ

As I was saying, you can access that through the Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam website, and it has links that will take you directly to our Judge Advocate General site.

00:10:51:09 - 00:12:12:26

MARY OPITZ

And when you go to that, it will take you right to the Redhill claims area and the page that you will see will be two sided on the left-hand side. It will address the military service members and the claims, and there will be a link that they can click to be able to bring up the forms that are necessary to file their claim. And on the right-hand side of that page, about midway, there will be a link for our civilians to be able to click that link and go directly into the claims package, and that claims package is written with a handy checklist that they can go down through and make sure that they have done everything that they need to protect their claim. They also have directions going down through to help them. But if they have questions and I'll be providing the numbers toward the end, so it's fresh in everyone's mind, but we have numbers that they can call us. We are on call to help everyone from all 0500 to 1600 Hawaii Standard Time and those last three hours. 1300 to 1600 hundred Hawaii Standard Time. Well, that's after hours for us. We are available. We are here to help. And so, we have numbers there as well. I'm actually one of them. And you're able to reach out and get some, some good information if the instructions in the packet are troublesome at all. We're here to help.

00:12:13:08 - 00:12:33:26

CAPT GUENTHER

OK. What kind of documents are required for folks to submit a claim?

MARY OPITZ

All right, well, we're going to need them to fill out line items, which is just a fancy way of saying break down each one of the items, the personal property that has been irreparably damaged due to this water situation and list them.



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MARY OPITZ

Now we're going to need to help process the claim and idea of the ownership. So maybe proof of pictures of these items or receipts. And then we're going to need proof of some type of value. They may have receipts or they may be able to go online and perhaps provide us a snapshot of a comparable item similar to what they have had that's been damaged. We also need to know approximately the age of the item because there is some depreciation that takes into consideration with these items and compensating people. So, really ownership and value and the age of the item.

00:13:17:17 - 00:13:30:12

CAPT GUENTHER

OK. Okay. I think you mentioned this. But what if? What if you don't have the receipts, you know, for some older items? I wouldn't expect I might have receipts for something like that. What if someone doesn't have receipts? Can they still make a claim?

00:13:30:12 - 00:14:00:26

MARY OPITZ

Sure, they can still make the claim. And what we ask is if they can again to go online and maybe find a picture and price for a comparable item if they don't have those receipts anymore. And please know that our claims examiners are well-trained and experienced, and if they have any questions, they will reach out to the person who's filed the claim. We're here to help. So, submit what you can and then let us help you through the rest of the way.

00:14:01:08 - 00:14:22:05

CAPT GUENTHER

OK? And how long would you say the process takes?

MARY OPITZ

Well, I can't unfortunately provide anybody with a "it's going to be immediate". We don't know how many claims we'll have. We do have a finite number of claims examiners.

00:14:22:05 - 00:14:39:01

MARY OPITZ

And so, what we can promise you is that as soon as you submit that claim, we will bring it on board and we will open it up and assign it to a claims examiner and that claims examiner will reach out to you. If there are any questions, if additional documentation is needed, then we will give you 30 days to provide that and we'll stay in touch with you if you need longer than that.



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MARY OPITZ

But once we have all that information, then we will be moving forward as carefully on a case-by-case basis as we can to finish your claim and provide you with the results. We do ask that people keep up with us.

00:14:53:08 - 00:15:46:23

MARY OPITZ

It's so important that we have an up to date, phone number and email and address, and I know people's addresses have been changing a bit, unfortunately. But please stay in touch with us with an up-to-date email and phone numbers so that we can reach you if we have questions and so that we can reach you to be able to pay you as well. And there are two other things that I want to state just quickly. There is a two-year statute of limitations to file a claim, which means that from November 28, 2021 you have two years and that claim must be received by our office in Norfolk, Virginia and that is clearly on the claims packet and on our website. But I do want to highlight that. That there is a two-year statute of limitations. And as part of that documentation, we do ask that if you have private insurance that you do submit a claim, if they deny it, that's fine. Just send us that denial letter. If they pay part of it, send us that adjudication letter. And that way we can be sure that everybody is compensated for their claims, but that they are not doubly compensated.

00:16:01:20 - 00:16:17:13

CAPT GUENTHER

OK. And if someone has a question, who should they call?

MARY OPITZ

OK, feels like Ghost Busters who do you call? You're going to call PCU, and we are here for you. Like I said, we are here from 0500 Hawaii Standard Time to 1600 Hawaii Standard Time. And while the numbers are available in our website, I will also give them 888-897-8271, 757-440-6315. You can email us at [Norfolkclaims@Navy.Mil](mailto:Norfolkclaims@Navy.Mil). And then the after hours, after hours for us, but that 1300 to 1600 Hawaii Standard Time, you can call 571-271-1616 or 202-604-0139.

00:17:01:07 - 00:17:21:29

CAPT GUENTHER

OK, Marry, thank you so much. I'm noting in my notes, it also sounds like some of this contact info is in our residents' resources guide, so you can pull it out there. But thank you so much for being on and thank you for your time in Hawaii helping us get set up with this process of benefits and claims for our community. And I really appreciate your service to our community.



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MARY OPITZ

You are welcome. Thank you for having me on. And as you said, that resident resource guide is an invaluable resource. It is a joint guide. All the services have come together, along with the EPA and the Department of Health and extremely helpful and provides some great information again about your items, your personal property items and what is irreparably damaged or not. So great assistance. Thank you and aloha.

00:17:21:29-00:18:33:10

CAPT GUENTHER

Thank you and aloha to you. That was your daily water update for today. Please join us tomorrow, same time. We're monitoring your questions on Facebook, and you can also email your questions to see [CNRHPAO@gmail.com](mailto:CNRHPAO@gmail.com). Don't forget to check out that water info website at Navy Dot now slash joint base water. And don't forget to check out the good stuff at Great Lakes Hawaii dot com slash. We got you. Please remember we're all in this together as one community and ohana. So, stay safe. Take care of each other, take care of yourself, and we'll see you next time.