

# 11 El Toro sites won't need cleanup, Marines say

**ENVIRONMENT:** A study finds no hazardous levels of chemicals at nearly half the base's 24 polluted sites.

**MARY ANN MILBOURN**  
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Toxic contamination at nearly half of the 24 polluted sites identified at El Toro Marine Corps Air Station poses no significant health threat and requires no

cleanup, according to a new Marine Corps study.

The 11 sites range from one where there was a five-gallon fuel spill to aircraft-refueling and petroleum-disposal areas. Four drainage channels that collect runoff also were studied for possible risk to wildlife.

The study found some contamination, but not enough to pose a major cancer risk.

Substances that are hazardous but don't cause cancer also were found, mostly manganese, which occurs naturally in the soil, as

well as arsenic and the herbicide MCP. They were detected in amounts equal to natural background levels, the Marines said.

"You could have a house on this property and live there for 30 years and the contamination would not put you at any greater risk than anywhere else in Orange County," said Lt. Matt Morgan, a Marine spokesman. "We are extremely confident there is no threat to human health."

Greg Hurley, head of a citizens advisory panel that is monitoring

cleanup at El Toro, said the group's biggest concern is that there be no building restrictions on the sites if there is no cleanup. That will give the county maximum flexibility to develop the areas after the base closes in 1999.

The Marines now have released studies of 12 of the 24 polluted sites. Last month, they recommended cleaning up a site that is contaminating ground water under the base and Irvine's Woodbridge area.

## WANT TO COMMENT

Public comments on the proposal not to clean up the sites at the El Toro base are being accepted until Aug. 16. Comments can be mailed to Joseph Joyce, Base Realignment and Closures Environmental Coordinator, ACS Environment (1AU), MCAS El Toro, P.O. Box 95001, Santa Ana, 92709-5001, faxed to (714) 726-6586.