

PRESS RELEASE

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Results begin trickling in on Navy drinking water well testing surrounding Atlantic Field

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. (Nov. 28, 2017) – Initial lab results began arriving Monday for the Navy’s first batch of tests conducted on residential drinking water wells in the community of Atlantic, N.C.

The tests, which were part of a U.S. Navy project designed to ensure drinking water supplies have not been affected by past Navy fire-fighting operations, were scheduled with property owners earlier this month due to the community’s proximity to Marine Corps Outlying Landing Field Atlantic, locally known as Atlantic Field.

In May 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued lifetime health advisory levels for two perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) – specifically perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) – at 70 parts per trillion, individually and combined when both are present. Although these health advisory levels are not enforceable, the Navy has committed to testing for them as part of a Navy-wide measure aimed at protecting neighboring communities near Navy and Marine Corps airfields.

While the initial lab results in Atlantic indicated that the first group of samples collected did not contain PFAS above the EPA’s Lifetime Health Advisory, study officials point out that it is too early to speculate on how the overall investigation will end up. Water samples will continue to be collected into mid-December, pushing the remainder of initial lab testing into early January. After the preliminary results are validated by a second independent lab, property owners will receive further written notification of the study’s results.

PFAS, including PFOS and PFOA, are man-made chemicals persistent in the environment. PFAS has been used since the 1950s in many commercial and consumer products that resist heat, stains, grease and water. It has been used in a variety of products and substances such as non-stick cookware, food packaging such as microwaveable popcorn bags, and water resistant textiles and sprays used to treat carpets and fabrics. The most common historical Navy use of these

chemicals has been through the firefighting agent, aqueous film forming foam (AFFF). There are no known records indicating AFFF use at MCOLF Atlantic, but the Navy is conducting this drinking water investigation as a precautionary measure to eliminate any doubts about potential drinking water contamination by these chemicals.

In Atlantic, the Navy held a public meeting on November 8 to explain the sampling program to the community and respond to questions from the public. Also on hand at the meeting and working in partnership with the Navy were representatives from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, North Carolina Division of Public Health, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4, and Carteret County Department of Health.

More information about the Navy's PFAS initiative and drinking water testing program may be found at: <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/eie/pages/pfc-pfas.aspx> and <https://go.usa.gov/xR6SX>.