The Navy has established the following website to keep you updated as more information becomes available:

http://go.usa.gov/xkH8c

FOR MORE INFORMATION
www.seanavy.mil/iee/pages/jfc-PFOA.aspx

The Department of the Navy is conducting a groundwater and drinking water investigation around Naval Air Station Whidbey Island’s Area 6, including the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Municipal Landfill. This investigation seeks to identify the extent to which contaminants have migrated off-base and to determine if these contaminants are present in groundwater or drinking water near Area 6.

The Navy is working closely with local agencies, including the Island County Public Health, the Washington State Department of Health, the Washington State Department of Ecology, and the Washington State Department of Health’s Region 10, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, to identify the extent to which contaminants have migrated off-base and to quantify the extent to which these contaminants threaten groundwater and drinking water near Area 6.

The Navy has identified PFAS as a known human liver carcinogen, to which infants and young children may be more susceptible. Animal studies report effects on human liver carcinogenesis, children may be more susceptible.

1,4-Dioxane – The health effects in people drinking water contaminated with 1,4-dioxane are not well understood. Animal studies report effects on liver, reproductive organs, and kidneys, as well as possible effects on fetal growth and development. People breathing low levels of 1,4-dioxane for short periods of time have reported eye and nose irritation. The EPA has classified 1,4-dioxane as “likely to be carcinogenic to humans.” Animal studies have shown increased incidences of nasal cavity, liver, and gall bladder tumors after exposure to 1,4-dioxane.

Based on what is known and still unknown about PFOS, PFOA, vinyl chloride, and 1,4-dioxane, it is recommended that people not drink or cook with water that contains these compounds above the action levels.

If your preliminary results show that your drinking water contains vinyl chloride, 1,4-dioxane, PFOS, and/or PFOA above the action levels, the Navy will provide bottled water or an alternate water supply until a long-term solution is implemented.
BACKGROUND

PFAS are manufactured chemicals that have been used since the 1950s in many household and industrial products because of their stain- and water-repellent properties (for example, upholstered furniture, carpet, nonstick cookware, floor wax, and the lining of microwave popcorn bags). PFAS are now widespread in the environment and in people. Once these compounds are released to the environment, they remain there for a long time.

PFAS are a type of “emerging contaminant,” which is a chemical or material characterized by a perceived, potential, or real threat to human health or the environment, or by a lack of published health standards. PFAS have no Safe Drinking Water Act regulatory standards or routine water quality testing requirements. The EPA continues to study PFAS to determine if regulation is needed.

In May 2016, the EPA announced lifetime health advisory (LHA) levels for two PFAS, specifically perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Health advisory levels are not regulatory standards; they are health-based concentrations which should offer a margin of protection for all Americans throughout their life from adverse health effects resulting from exposure to PFOS and PFOA in drinking water. The EPA LHA is 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOS and/or 70 ppt for PFOA, individually or combined. The EPA LHA for PFOS/PFOA is the action level the Navy will use for the drinking water investigation for Area 6. The drinking water investigation for Area 6 is focused on PFOS and PFOA because these are the only PFAS for which the EPA has established an LHA level in drinking water; however, other PFAS compounds will also be analyzed for informational purposes.

Vinyl chloride is used in the production of polyvinyl chloride (a material used to manufacture a variety of plastic and vinyl products including pipes, wire and cable coatings, and packaging materials); has been used in the past as a refrigerant; has been used in smaller amounts in furniture and automobile upholstery, wall coverings, housewares, and automotive parts; and can be created in the environment when certain chlorinated solvents, such as trichloroethene, break down. The EPA has established an enforceable MCL for vinyl chloride and 1,4-dioxane. The EPA is requesting access to sample water wells that may be impacted by vinyl chloride, 1,4-dioxane, PFOS, and/or PFOA. The off-base sampling area includes parcels within ¼ mile of the direction of groundwater flow to the south and parcels within ½ mile of the western Area 6 boundary. If you do not have a well on your property and receive water from the City of Oak Harbor, please let us know. The City of Oak Harbor’s drinking water supply comes from the Skagit River in Anacortes, Washington, and is not part of this investigation.

The Navy encourages you to schedule sampling of your well by leaving a voicemail at 360-396-1030, or by emailing the Navy’s Public Affairs Office at PAO_feedback@navy.mil. If your property is within the designated sampling area and a water well is not present on your property, we would like you to confirm that information by contacting the Navy at the phone number or email address above.