IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

On 20 February 2026, the Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight was notified of test results from water testing conducted at Osan Air Base on 19 January 2026. The Department of War (DoW) requires public notification for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) analytes detected above established trigger levels in DoW drinking water systems outside the United States.

The recent testing identified the following result exceeding the trigger level of 2.0 parts per trillion (ppt) of Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS):

- PFOS was detected at a level of 2.21 ppt (or 2.21 ng/L).

In accordance with DoW policy, Bioenvironmental Engineering will continue initial monitoring by collecting quarterly PFAS samples. The results of PFAS analytes detected above trigger levels, as defined in the DoW policy, will be posted on the Osan Air Base website. The Air Force will monitor these contaminants and use this data to ensure compliance with the EPA's new PFAS national Primary Drinking Water Standards and implement mitigation measures as necessary. For additional information on PFAS, please refer to the following link: ASD(EI&E) - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) (osd.mil).

What are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and where do they come from?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of thousands of man-made chemicals. PFAS have been used in a variety of industries and consumer products around the globe, including in the U.S., since the 1940s. PFAS have been used to make coatings and products that are used as oil and water repellents for carpets, clothing, paper packaging for food, and cookware. They are also contained in some foams (aqueous film-forming foam or AFFF) used for fighting petroleum fires.

What does this mean?

This is not an emergency notification. The trigger levels are designed to guide the frequency of monitoring. They are established at one-half of the Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for regulated PFAS and one-half of the Hazard Index MCL for mixtures of PFHxS, HFPO-DA (GenX), PFNA, and PFBS. It's important to note that a single sampling result does not automatically indicate a health-based exceedance. Nonetheless, scientific studies have associated long-term PFAS exposure with health issues, including liver damage, elevated cholesterol, increased cancer risk, and compromised immune systems. Pregnant women and children may be more vulnerable to these effects. More information regarding PFAS exposure can be found on the EPA website (https://www.epa.gov/pfas) and on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry website (https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/).

What should I do?

There is nothing you need to do. This is not an immediate health risk for the general population. You can continue to use the installation's water supply.

What is being done?

The DoW is finalizing a new approach that aligns with EPA policies for PFAS. In the meantime, Bioenvironmental Engineering (BE), Civil Engineering (CE), and other installation partners involved in the Drinking Water Working Group have begun to evaluate health and future compliance risks, and to evaluate possible mitigation measures. Additionally, recurring monitoring will take place until results are below detectable levels.

For more information, please contact Bioenvironmental Engineering at 784-2623.

This notice is being sent to you by 51st Operational Medical Readiness Squadron, Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight.
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