

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

On 1 December 2023, the Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight was notified of the test results from water testing conducted at Gimhae Air Base on 30 October 2023. The Department of Defense requires public notification for any detectable levels of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

The recent tests detected the following PFAS substances:

- Perfluorobutanesulfonic acid (PFBS) was detected at a level of 2.56 ng/L, or 2.56 parts per trillion (ppt).
- Perfluorobutanoic acid (PFBA) was detected at a level of 4.89 ng/L, or 4.89 ppt.
- Perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA) was detected at a level of 2.39 ng/L, or 2.39 ppt.
- Perfluorohexanoic acid (PFHxA) was detected at a level of 8.63 ng/L, or 8.63 ppt.
- Perfluoropentanoic acid (PFPeA) was detected at a level of 6.30 ng/L, or 6.30 ppt.
- Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) was detected at a level of 4.16 ng/L, or 4.16 ppt.

Currently, there are no federal regulatory limits for PFBS, PFBA, PFHpA, PFHxA, or PFPeA. However, Department of Defense's latest guidance is to ensure DoD drinking water systems limit PFOS and PFOA to below the EPA Health Advisory level of 70 ppt, and Gimhae's detected levels are well below this limit. **The installation is still providing safe drinking water that meets all current federal standards.**

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 at airfields and in industrial fire suppression processes because they rapidly extinguish fires, saving lives and protecting property. PFAS chemicals are persistent in the environment, and some are persistent in the human body – meaning they do not break down and they can accumulate over time.

What should I do?

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

What does this mean?

According to the EPA, over long periods of time PFAS may lead to weakening the body's ability to fight disease, increased risk of cancers, liver damage, and elevated cholesterol levels. Prolonged exposures to elevated PFAS levels over many years may also have negative health effects on vulnerable and immunocompromised populations, including pregnant people and developing babies. More information can be viewed at: <http://www.epa.gov/>

EPA's drinking water health advisories are designed to protect children and adults. The standards take into account the potential effects of contaminants on segments of the population that are most at risk. When the EPA sets each standard, the agency conducts a risk assessment in which scientist evaluate whether fetuses, infants, children, or other groups are more vulnerable to a contaminant than the general population. The standard is set to protect the most vulnerable group.

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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