

# ***SEABEE CENTER NEWS***

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## **Media Release**

### **Navy to Begin Testing Drinking Water**

**GULFPORT, Miss.** – The Navy will begin testing water from water wells used for drinking water April 19 in and around Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport (Seabee Base) as part of the its commitment to ensuring drinking water supplies are safe. There is no cost to well owners or users for this test. This is part of the Navy’s ongoing testing of drinking water which is taking place at and near Navy installations across the nation.

Navy officials met last week with staff members from Mississippi State’s congressional offices on Capitol Hill to discuss a variety of subjects, where officials shared the Navy’s current plan to test drinking water supplies around the Seabee Base, specifically in Long Beach, for perfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. Also last week, Navy leadership will met with local officials in the region.

PFAS are man-made chemicals persistent in the environment that are not absorbed well in soil and could migrate to groundwater. PFAS have been used for many years to make products that resist heat, stains, grease and water, and have been used in a variety of products and substances, such as non-stick pans; water resistant textiles and sprays with water resistant properties.

In May 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued lifetime health advisory levels for two PFAS, specifically perfluorooctane sulfonate, PFOS and perfluorooctanoic acid, PFOA, at 70 parts per trillion, individually and combined. While there are no EPA regulations for these compounds, the EPA established these lifetime health advisory levels to offer a margin of protection for all Americans throughout their life from potential adverse health effects resulting from exposure to PFOA and PFOS in drinking water.

The most common historical Navy use of these chemicals has been as firefighting foam (AFFF) used on Navy installations. AFFF is the most effective way to put out petroleum-based fires, such as an aircraft accident.

In June 2016, the Navy issued a policy to identify areas of potential release of these materials to the environment. As part of this policy, the Navy is testing for PFOS and PFOA in and around NCBC Gulfport.

The Navy will provide alternate drinking water (typically bottled water) for residents if their drinking water concentrations exceed the EPA lifetime health advisory levels for PFOA and/or PFOS.

The Navy will hold a public meeting at the Long Beach Senior Citizen Activity Center at 20257 Daugherty Road in Long Beach, April 18 to keep the community informed. They will contact well owners in the sample area which is just west/south west of the base. The Public meeting is being held in Long Beach in order for citizens to share their concerns and ask questions of public health experts. The Navy is committed to sharing additional information as it becomes available throughout the testing process.

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

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