



Information Sheet on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Environmental Testing At NASA's Wallops Flight Facility

Current as of May 4, 2017

This is an update to recent information provided by NASA Wallops.

NASA, in collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, is conducting testing of the facility's groundwater monitoring and drinking water wells for the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Tests results of the Wallops drinking water and Town of Chincoteague's drinking water show that the water is safe to drink. These tests were done using an independent laboratory for analysis.

Initial and follow-up tests of the Town of Chincoteague's drinking water detected the presence of PFAS at a level below the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Lifetime Health Advisory (LHA). According to the EPA, the Lifetime Health Advisory is set to be protective of all individuals, including the most sensitive populations.

The Town of Chincoteague is producing finished drinking water from three deep wells, none of which show detects of PFAS in independent sampling results.

Tests from sampling the Town of Chincoteague's seven wells, which are on Wallops property, show PFAS at a level above the EPA's Lifetime Health Advisory in two of three shallow wells and an adjacent deep water well. Results show PFAS in the Town of Chincoteague's third shallow well, but at a level below the Lifetime Health Advisory. The Town of Chincoteague is not using its shallow wells to produce finished water for the town, and has stopped using the one deep water well.

NASA continues to share sampling results with local, state and federal officials and to meet with the Town of Chincoteague, EPA, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to discuss next steps.

NASA and the Town of Chincoteague, with concurrence from EPA, VDEQ, and VDH, is working to further assess PFAS detected in the one deep water well, which is now off-line and not in use. NASA will continue to sample the Town of Chincoteague's four deep water wells as well as the Wallops and Chincoteague finished drinking water.

Sampling will occur over the next several weeks, and NASA will continue to use an independent lab to analyze samples.

Samples were also collected at two points on the west side of the facility near the 10-28 runway and one point on the south side of the facility to confirm whether or not PFAS is present in the groundwater in these areas.

NASA will continue to share all sampling results and will continue to communicate with officials from the Town of Chincoteague, EPA, VDEQ, and VDH to discuss results and develop any additional actions.

Background

PFAS are manmade compounds used extensively in a wide variety of consumer products and are also related to the use of a firefighting foam.

At a former firefighter training area located on the north-central side of the Wallops mainbase, firefighters conducted training with a commonly-used firefighting foam that contains PFAS compounds.

The Environmental Protection Agency has not established drinking water standards for PFAS. While not regulated, the EPA has been increasingly sampling for PFAS. Since 2013, the EPA has detected PFAS in numerous public water supplies serving 16 million people across 33 states. In May 2016, the EPA issued updated lifetime Health Advisory (HA) level guidelines for two PFAS compounds, perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA).

More on the EPA's HA here: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/drinkingwaterhealthadvisories_pfoa_pfos_updated_5.31.16.pdf.

For more information on PFAS, see:
https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc/docs/pfas_fact_sheet.pdf

NASA will continue to provide updates to officials and the public.

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