

# Fort Ord Cleanup Fact Sheet: Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

## Background:

- ◆ PFAS are a diverse group of chemical compounds that are resistant to heat, water, and oil. Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) are the most extensively studied and historically the most widely-used throughout the U.S.
- ◆ Since the 1950s, PFAS have been used in industrial applications, including aerospace, automotive, building and construction, and electronics, because they help reduce friction. PFAS have also been used in consumer products, such as carpeting, clothing, upholstery fabrics, paper food packaging, and non-stick cookware.
- ◆ In the 1970s, the Department of Defense (DoD) began using Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF) that contained PFOS and, in some formulations, PFOA for firefighting because it quickly extinguishes petroleum-based fires.
- ◆ PFOS, PFOA, and other PFAS have been found in people, the environment, wildlife, and fish all over the world and do not break down easily in the environment. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects, and PFAS are the subject of increasing regulation worldwide.
- ◆ DoD and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) have established screening levels for eight PFAS, including PFOA and PFOSS, in drinking water and soil. (<https://www.epa.gov/risk/regional-screening-levels-rsls-generic-tables>) Screening levels are used when a potential site is initially investigated to determine if potentially significant levels of contamination are present to warrant further investigation.
- ◆ The U.S. Department of the Army (Army) has conducted historical records reviews to identify locations where there was a potential for a release of PFAS. Locations on Army installations with the greatest likelihood of releases of PFAS include fire training areas, AFFF storage locations, aircraft crash sites, fuel farms, and sites associated with aviation assets. Landfills and wastewater treatment plants were also considered because they may have received waste streams containing PFAS.

## Army Activities at the former Fort Ord:

- ◆ In 2020, the Army conducted a review of historical activities at the former Fort Ord to determine whether a release of PFAS may have occurred and to identify potential sources and types of release. The results are summarized in the Technical Summary Report for PFAS (Document Number: OU2-722B).
- ◆ Extensive site-wide research and investigations, including interviews with site personnel, were conducted during the development of this report, which was reviewed by USEPA, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (CCRWQCB).
- ◆ The report indicates there was limited historical use of PFAS-containing material at the former Fort Ord.
- ◆ In 2021, an additional evaluation was conducted in the form of Preliminary Assessment (PA). The Army gathered historical and other available information about site conditions where it was suspected or known that PFAS containing materials were used, stored, or disposed. The Preliminary Assessment Narrative Report was issued on September 15, 2022 (Document Number: BW-2904B).
- ◆ Based on the results of the PA, the Army conducted a Site Inspection for PFAS in 2023, which included soil and groundwater sampling to confirm whether or not a release of PFAS occurred at specific sites recommended for additional investigation in the Preliminary Assessment Narrative Report. The Site Inspection Narrative Report was issued on December 14, 2023 (Document Number: BW-2942A).
- ◆ **Next Step:** The Army is currently working with regulatory agencies to plan for the Remedial Investigation Phase.

## PFAS Investigation Process at the former Fort Ord:

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- ◆ The Army will assess and investigate potential PFAS releases and implement necessary response actions in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The Army follows the CERCLA process to fully investigate releases, prioritize responses, and determine appropriate cleanup actions based on risk.
- ◆ The CERCLA process includes multiple phases: Preliminary Assessment, Site Inspection, Remedial Investigation, Feasibility Study, Remedial Design/Remedial Action, Remedial Action-Construction/Remedial Action-Operations, and Long Term Management. Each of these phases can take several years to complete. The first two phases are described below.
- ◆ **Preliminary Assessment (PA):** The PA is an initial review and analysis of available information to determine whether a release of PFAS may have occurred, the potential sources, and type of release. It includes an evaluation of a site's relative risk and recommendations on the need for subsequent phases in the cleanup process or no further action.
- ◆ **Site Inspection (SI):** The SI characterizes the site and sources; determines likelihood of release of PFAS to various media (e.g., groundwater, surface water, or soil); estimates the receptors actually or potentially exposed; and determines what additional action, if any, is appropriate.

## Your drinking water is safe:

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The Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) provides drinking water to the former Fort Ord. Water pumped from MCWD supply wells on former Fort Ord consistently meets drinking water safety standards established by the USEPA and the California State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water. Drinking water quality is regularly tested and results are reported in an annual Consumer Confidence Report found at: [https://www.mcwd.org/gsa\\_ccr.html](https://www.mcwd.org/gsa_ccr.html)

## For more information:

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### **U.S. Army Fort Ord Base Realignment and Closure:**

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Additional documents related to this site cleanup are available at [www.FortOrdCleanup.com](http://www.FortOrdCleanup.com).

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