

# EPA DELETES PORTIONS OF THE FORMER FORT ORD FROM SUPERFUND NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST

On May 14, 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Federal Register notice announcing the deletion of 11,934 acres of the 27,827 acre Fort Ord Superfund site, located in Monterey County, California, from the National Priorities List (NPL), also known as the “Superfund list.” This proposed deletion:

- only includes a part of the cleanup at a portion of the site where cleanup is finished; and
- only covers cleanup work for military munitions and soil pollution.

EPA policy allows for these cleaned up soil areas to be deleted separately from contaminated water and soil gas below the ground. The Army will continue to clean up the groundwater and soil gas on the 11,934 acres included in this deletion, as well as the remaining 15,893 acres of the site, as these areas are still in the Superfund program and on the NPL. EPA and the State of California (State) will continue to oversee the Army’s cleanup at the site.

Type of Contamination	Deleted from NPL	Remain on NPL
Military Munitions	11,934 acres	15,893 acres
Soil	11,934 acres	15,893 acres
Soil Gas	0 acres	27,827 acres
Groundwater	0 acres	27,827 acres

The cleanup goals achieved were decided by a site reuse evaluation that looked into potential uses of the land. The reuse options are identified in the Fort Ord Base Reuse Plan (<https://www.fora.org/BRP.html>). Much of this property has been transferred from the Army to local jurisdictions. In some cases, the property has already been redeveloped to benefit the community as part of economic recovery from the closure of the Fort Ord Army base in 1994. This deletion recognizes 30+ years of collaborative Federal and State efforts at the site and will hopefully spur new reuse and redevelopment opportunities for the surrounding jurisdictions.

## How was the Fort Ord Superfund site contaminated?

The former Fort Ord Army base is adjacent to Monterey Bay in northwestern Monterey County, California, bordering the cities of Seaside, Sand City, Monterey, and Del Rey Oaks to the south and Marina to the north. Fort Ord served primarily as a base for infantry troops (foot soldiers) beginning in 1917 until closure in 1994. When it was in use, Fort Ord operated like a small city. Military training and base facilities (base landfill, sewage treatment plant, vehicle maintenance shops, etc.) resulted in the release of hazardous substances and pollutants into the soil and groundwater and munitions and explosives of concern in former training areas. The Army has been conducting investigation and cleanup activities at the former Fort Ord under Superfund law since 1990, with the oversight of EPA and the State.

### **Does the State approve of the proposed deletion?**

The State approved the proposed deletion through letters sent by the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board in July 2020. They agree with the EPA's decision to delete these parcels at the Fort Ord Superfund Site from the NPL, and EPA's assessment that cleanup is complete on military munitions and soil contamination on 11,934 acres of the site.

### **Is my drinking water safe?**

Fort Ord drinking water is safe and protected from contamination plumes. The Marina Coast Water District supplies drinking water to the City of Marina and former Fort Ord. Fort Ord drinking water meets all Federal and State regulatory standards. 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). Groundwater contamination site-wide will remain on the NPL. All groundwater remedies are operational and effective, but cleanup levels have not been met.

### **What about PFAS?**

The Army is investigating potential releases of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS. PFAS contamination at Fort Ord is not included in the proposed partial deletion. These substances may be present in soil and/or groundwater at Army facilities from PFAS-containing aqueous film forming foam or from other sources. These chemicals may enter the environment through landfills and wastewater due to their presence in consumer products or as runoff to soil and water from other uses. The Army is conducting a Preliminary Assessment (PA) as required by Superfund law. A PA is an initial review and analysis of available information (historical records, sampling data, etc.) to determine whether a release may have occurred and the potential sources and type of release(s). If the PA results indicate further investigation is needed, the Army will conduct additional soil and groundwater sampling.

### **For parts of Fort Ord deleted from the NPL, what happens if new standards are developed or new contamination is found in the future?**

Superfund sites like Fort Ord where contamination is left in place at safe cleanup levels are regularly evaluated through what is called the Five-Year Review process. Five-Year Reviews happen whether the site is on the NPL or has been fully or partially deleted from the NPL. EPA approval, with State concurrence, of each Five-Year Review is required. The next Fort Ord Five-Year Review will take place in 2022.

On a regular five-year schedule, Five-Year Reviews evaluate the cleanup of a site against new standards or new contamination, in addition to ensuring that completed cleanup remedies are still in place and working as designed. In the past, Five-Year Reviews at Fort Ord have led to additional investigation or cleanup being done to meet new or revised standards for contaminants like lead or PFAS compounds.

Once a site, or part of a site, is deleted from the NPL, Superfund law allows EPA to take actions to protect human health and the environment if future conditions change. These actions can include restoring a site, or portion of the site to the NPL. Deletion of the site from the NPL does not allow the Army to escape legal liability for future cleanup that may be needed. The Army is

ultimately responsible for the cleanup into perpetuity, regardless of whether the site is on the NPL.

**Where can I find more information?**

To view the deletion notice and supporting documentation (detailed cleanup descriptions, maps), and responses to public comments, visit the website <http://www.regulations.gov> and type EPA-HQ-SFUND-1990-0010-0153 in the Search bar.

Additional Fort Ord information and documents are available online at: [fortordcleanup.com](http://fortordcleanup.com). If you have questions, please contact Maeve Clancy EPA Project Manager at [clancy.maeve@epa.gov](mailto:clancy.maeve@epa.gov) or by phone at 415-947-4105; or Gavin Pauley EPA Community Involvement Coordinator at [pauley.gavin@epa.gov](mailto:pauley.gavin@epa.gov) or by phone at 415-535-3725.



