

Public Comment Period: Health Evaluation of Drinking Water Former Fort Ord Army Base From 1985 to 1994

A report by Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

Re-evaluation: The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) re-evaluated contamination levels in the 1985–1994 Fort Ord drinking water. ATSDR assessed whether these exposures posed a health risk in the past. The full report is available at

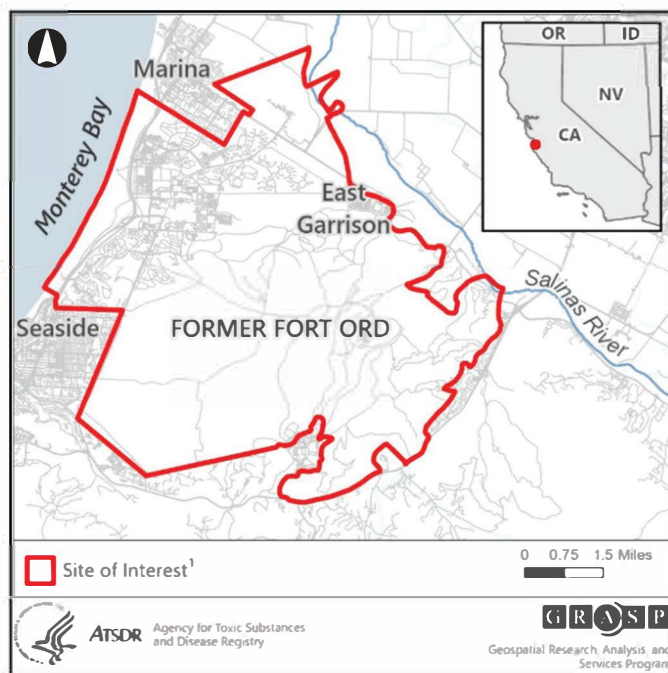
<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/PHA/PHAListing.aspx?StateIndicator=CA>

Purpose: In 2022, ATSDR was petitioned to re-evaluate health risks associated with past exposure to contaminants in drinking water at the Fort Ord site. The purpose of this health consultation is to re-evaluate contamination levels from 1985–1994 in Fort Ord drinking water supplies to determine whether exposures to drinking water presented human health risks in the past.

Results: In assessing health effects, ATSDR made conservative assumptions about peoples' exposures, to represent high-end exposure scenarios for drinking-water contaminants. This is a health-protective approach that may result in overestimating exposures.

Conclusion 1: ATSDR concluded that drinking water contaminants were not a past health hazard. Residents and soldiers-in-training who drank, showered, washed, and cooked with water from former Fort Ord drinking-water wells from 1985 to 1994 were not at risk for health effects due to contaminant exposures. The analysis of contaminant levels in drinking-water wells during this period indicated that these levels were below health concern thresholds.

Conclusion 2: ATSDR cannot conclude whether contaminants in former Fort Ord and Marina drinking water systems prior to 1985 could have harmed people's health. There were no available water quality sampling data prior to 1985.



ATSDR Public Comment Period July 9 to August 22, 2026

Please submit comments by August 22, 2026

By email: OCHHAPublicComment@cdc.gov

By mail (postmarked by August 22):
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Attn: Records Center
4770 Buford Highway NE, MS S106-5
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Please reference Fort Ord in your correspondence.

ATSDR Virtual Public Meeting July 29, 2026 3:30 p.m.- 4:30 p.m. (Pacific Time)

Join by visiting the following link:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/23715512923099?p=FQybobIDRmvTGb0DPE>

ATSDR will provide an overview of the report and answer questions. Representatives of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Fort Ord Environmental Cleanup, and Marina Coast Water District will also be available.

ATSDR Evaluation of Fort Ord

- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is a federal, nonregulatory, environmental public health agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ATSDR is required to conduct public health assessment activities for sites listed on the National Priority List (NPL).
- In 1996, ATSDR completed a Public Health Assessment (PHA) for Fort Ord. In 2001, ATSDR completed a Health Consultation regarding air data for a future controlled burn. In 2005, ATSDR completed a second Health Consultation to assess air exposures during a 2003 prescribed burn for several former firing ranges. The 1996 Fort Ord PHA concluded there were no apparent public health hazards.
- In the new health evaluation, ATSDR used new science, methods and tools that have become available since the 1996 assessment.

Drinking Water is Safe

- When Fort Ord was an active base, the Army owned and operated its drinking water system. The Main Garrison area of Fort Ord and Marina first observed saltwater intrusion in the 1960's.
- As a result of the advance in seawater intrusion, Fort Ord relocated its wells to the east. In 1984, Fort Ord drilled drinking water wells 29, 30 and 31 further inland. These wells became main sources of drinking water at Fort Ord and are still in use. Older wells became inactive or on standby status and were later destroyed. The Marina water system drilled deeper wells.
- In the mid-1980s, Army began testing for volatile organic compounds in water supply wells in compliance with a new California law.
- The Army operated the Fort Ord water system under a state permit and issued annual Consumer Confidence Reports. In 2001, the Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) acquired the Fort Ord water and wastewater systems from the Army. MCWD currently provides drinking water to Central Marina and the former Fort Ord area.
- **Water supplied by MCWD consistently meets safe drinking water standards** established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (DDW).
- MCWD regularly tests drinking water quality and reports results to DDW and in their annual Consumer Confidence Report.

Fort Ord Environmental Cleanup

- The first site investigation was conducted in 1984 in a Fire Drill Area (Operable Unit 1). In 1985, groundwater contamination was detected in municipal wells in Fort Ord and in the City of Marina, and the investigation of Fort Ord Landfills (Operable Unit 2) began. Fort Ord was placed on the NPL in 1990.
- Remediation efforts for Operable Unit 2 have included covering the landfill with a protective layer to prevent rainwater infiltration and contaminant migration, installing and operating a landfill gas extraction and treatment system, and installing and improving groundwater treatment systems. The groundwater cleanup of Operable Unit 1 concluded in 2017.
- Today, the Army operates two groundwater treatment systems and has treated more than 13 billion gallons of groundwater.
- The investigation into per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at Fort Ord is in progress. PFAS are a class of man-made chemicals that were not previously known as potential contaminants. The Army completed Preliminary Investigation in 2022 and Site Inspection in 2023. The Remedial Investigation is underway. MCWD has tested the drinking water supply and has not detected any PFAS that exceed action levels.
- The environmental cleanup of the former Fort Ord is overseen by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and California Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

For more information:

U.S. Army Fort Ord Environmental Cleanup

<https://fortordcleanup.com>

Phone: (831) 393-1284 or (800) 852-9699

Email: Outreach@fortordcleanup.com

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Phone: (415) 535-3725 or (800) 231-3075

Email: Pauley.Gavin@epa.gov

Marina Coast Water District

<https://www.mcwd.org>