

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

The Main Base Water Tower #1 briefly exceeded the recommended health advisory (HA) levels for individual or combined levels of Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). The recommended HA level for this is 70 parts per trillion (ppt). Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we did to correct this situation.

We routinely monitor for the presence of contaminants in the drinking water system. Based on the sampling results, Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) tested higher than the 2016 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Health Advisory (HA) on 4 August 2023. The results are provided in Table 1. The 2016 EPA HA is the concentration above which action will be taken to reduce exposure to PFOA and PFOS. Misawa AB is sampling quarterly to monitor the situation, and periodic updates will be available at <https://www.misawa.af.mil/>.

Location	PFOS+PFOA Results (ppt)	PFOS+PFOA Health Advisory Level (ppt)
Main Base Water Tower #1	70.3	70

## What are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and where do they come from?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of thousands of man-made chemicals. PFOS and PFOA are in this group of chemicals. PFAS have been used in a variety of industries and consumer products around the globe, including in the U.S., since the 1940s. PFAS have been used to make coatings and products that are used as oil and water repellents for carpets, clothing, paper packaging for food, and cookware. They are also contained in some foams (aqueous film-forming foam or AFFF) used for fighting petroleum fires at airfields and in industrial fire suppression processes because they rapidly extinguish fires, saving lives and protecting property. PFAS chemicals are persistent in the environment, and some are persistent in the human body – meaning they do not break down and they can accumulate over time.

## What should I do?

This is not an immediate risk for the general population. You can continue to use the installation's water supply. As soon as elevated readings were identified, Civil Engineering (CE) took actions to fix the problem.

## What does this mean?

According to the EPA, over long periods of time PFAS may lead to weakening the body's ability to fight disease, increased risk of cancers, liver damage, and elevated cholesterol levels. Prolonged exposures to elevated PFAS levels over many years may also have negative health effects on vulnerable and immunocompromised populations, including pregnant people, developing babies. More information can be viewed at: <http://www.epa.gov/>

EPA's drinking water health advisories are designed to protect children and adults. The standards take into account the potential effects of contaminants on segments of the population that are most at risk. When the EPA sets each standard, the agency conducts a risk assessment in which scientist evaluate whether fetuses, infants, children, or other groups are more vulnerable to a contaminant than the general population. The standard is set to protect the most vulnerable group.

## What is being done?

Upon notification that Misawa Air Base exceeded the EPA's Lifetime Health Advisory level of 70 parts per trillion, Misawa Air Base immediately turned off two groundwater wells with suspected levels on concentrations. Repeating sampling of main base water determined the PFOS/PFOA levels were below EPA's Lifetime Health Advisory levels.

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Security Hill and North Area both produce drinking water from different groundwater wells and were not affected by this incident.

For more information, please contact Bioenvironmental Engineering at 226-6010.

This notice is being sent to you by 35th Operational Medical Readiness Squadron, Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight.  
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