



**Luke Air Force Base Community Fact Sheet**  
**Testing Private Drinking Water Wells for**  
**Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) + Perfluorooctanoic Acid**  
**(PFOA)**



The U.S. Air Force (USAF) requests permission to sample your drinking water as part of a sampling program to determine if private drinking water wells in certain areas near Luke Air Force Base (LAFB) have been impacted by the compounds perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), and if additional actions are needed to protect human health.

PFOS and PFOA are used in a variety of household and industrial products, including firefighting foam. PFOS and PFOA are components of legacy Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) — a firefighting agent the Air Force began using in the 1970s to extinguish petroleum fires; use of AFFF provides the USAF with an essential firefighting capability to protect human lives, aircraft and facilities. The Air Force launched a comprehensive approach -- identify, respond, prevent -- to assess the potential for PFOS/PFOA contamination of drinking water, on and off installations, and respond appropriately. The USAF is coordinating closely with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

PFOS and PFOA are not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), but EPA issued life time health advisory (HA) levels for these chemicals in 2016. Using the EPA's guidance to assess contamination risks, the Air Force identified 203 installations where releases may have occurred, to include LAFB where the firefighting agent was historically used for fire training, equipment testing and emergency response incidents.

The USAF recently collected groundwater samples near the LAFB property line as part of a base-wide site inspection for PFOS and PFOA. Sampling results showed PFOS and PFOA in the groundwater. Several factors are evaluated to determine additional locations for sampling, such as depth to groundwater, potential for the compounds to migrate off the base, and potential pathways for the contaminant to reach drinking water sources. The USAF is now conducting an additional sampling effort in your area.

Based on these factors, **the USAF and EPA recommends your drinking water well be sampled for PFOS and PFOA, which can be scheduled with you at your convenience and will be completed at no cost to you.** Upon receipt of sampling results, the Air Force will make yours available to you for your review. In the event the test results show levels above the EPA's LHA, the Air Force will assess its role and authority to provide alternate drinking water to those affected and in developing a plan for long-term mitigation to drinking water. If PFOS or PFOA are detected, but at levels below the HA, the Air Force may request your permission to conduct further sampling, as needed, to evaluate concentrations. If the test results show no PFOS or PFOA, then no further sampling will be required.

## **Questions and Answers**

**Q: Do I have to get my well tested?**

A: You are not required to have your private well tested; however, your well is located near an area of Luke AFB known to contain PFOS/PFOA in the groundwater. USAF and EPA recommend that your well be tested to ensure the health and safety of your family. The testing process is quick and offered at no cost to residents.

**Q: How do I get my drinking water well tested?**

A: Please contact the Luke AFB well sampling coordinators listed below to arrange for your well to be sampled by our support contractor. Our contractor will work with you to arrange for a date/time to conduct the sampling and assist you in completing the sampling permission form.

Sarah Schneider, Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

(865) 218-1968 or (865) 789-9819

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**Q: My water has been previously tested, why wasn't I told about this before?**

A: PFOS/PFOA are not included in routine drinking water sampling since they are classified as an "emerging contaminant." Emerging contaminants do not have established regulatory standards, but evolving science has identified potential risk to human health, and regulatory standards are under consideration by the Environmental Protection Agency. Recent sampling of a PFOS/PFOA release site at LAFB has determined your well is in an area where the groundwater may be impacted by PFOS/PFOA. LAFB is conducting this PFOS/PFOA sampling of private drinking water wells in certain areas to ensure we can properly and quickly address any potential concern to the health of our Airmen, their families and our neighbors.

**Q: What are PFOS and PFOA?**

A: PFOS and PFOA are synthetic fluorinated organic compounds used in many industrial and consumer products, and in foam used by commercial industries and the armed services to extinguish fuel fires. These chemicals have been used for many years to make products that resist heat, stains, grease and water. In 1970, the Air Force began using Aqueous Film Forming Foam, which contains PFOS and PFOA, to extinguish petroleum fires. AFFF is the most efficient extinguishing method for petroleum-based fires and is widely used across the firefighting industry, to include all commercial airports, to protect people and property. The Air Force has replaced legacy AFFF with a new, more environmentally responsible formula that contains no PFOS and only trace amounts of PFOA.

**Q: What are Health Advisory Levels (HAs)?**

A: EPA develops health advisories to provide information on contaminants that can cause human health effects and are known or anticipated to occur in drinking water. EPA's health advisories are non-enforceable and non-regulatory and provide technical information to state agencies and other public health officials on health effects, analytical methodologies, and treatment technologies associated with drinking water contamination. To provide residents, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a life-time of exposure to PFOS and PFOA from drinking water, EPA established the health advisory levels at 70 parts per trillion (ppt) in May 2016. When both PFOA and

PFOS are found in drinking water, the combined concentrations of PFOS and PFOA should be compared with the 70 ppt health advisory level. More information can be found at the EPA website listed below.

## **Additional Information**

### **Air Force PFOS/PFOA Web site:**

<http://www.afcec.af.mil/Home/Environment/Perfluorinated-Compounds/>

### **EPA Website:**

<https://www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfass-under-tsca>

### **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Website:**

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc/index.html>

## **Contact Us**

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