

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances and Joint Base Cape Cod Fact Sheet

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What are PFAS?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s. Aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) containing PFAS was used by the Department of the Air Force starting in 1970 to fight petroleum-based fires during emergencies and training. PFAS are widespread in the environment and can stay in people's bodies and the environment for a long-time as they do not readily break down.

How can I be exposed and what is the risk?

The primary route of exposure is by ingestion (eating food or drinking water containing PFAS). Many household products (non-stick cookware, carpet/upholstery treatments, food packing materials) have contained PFAS in the past. Current scientific research suggests that exposure to high levels of certain PFAS may lead to adverse health outcomes such as reproductive effects (e.g., decreased fertility) and increased risk of some cancers, but it is unclear what health effects are associated with low levels of exposure to PFAS. Additional information regarding PFAS exposure can be found on the EPA website (<https://www.epa.gov/pfas>) and on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry website (<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/>).



Air Force actions to protect public health

Off-base private and municipal water supplies impacted by PFAS in the groundwater from JBCC were addressed by Air Force response actions including bottled water, carbon filtration installations and municipal connections to protect public health.

What is the status of PFAS Investigations at JBCC?

Groundwater investigations of PFAS at JBCC began in 2016. Several sites were investigated including the Otis Rotary where AFFF containing PFAS was applied twice for tanker truck rollovers by the base fire department in 1997 and 2000; at the flightline area at the hangars and the old fire department; and Fire Training Area 1 (FTA-1) where foam was used during training exercises. The FTA-1 site was closed to training in 1985. In addition to use at FTA-1, AFFF was also stored, used and spilled in and around several support facilities and runways, contributing to PFAS in soil, groundwater, and in surface water of Ashumet and Johns Ponds. To date, the Air Force has identified the following PFAS sites: Fire Training Area-1 (FTA-1); Land-fill-1; Flightline Operable Unit; Tanker Truck Rollover Sites; and Chemical Spill 10. Investigations are ongoing and future decisions will be made on addressing PFAS in groundwater and soil. PFAS impacts in groundwater have not been identified in the northern part of the base (Camp Edwards). That area is managed by the Impact Area Groundwater Study Program (IAGWSP).

What about the quality of local drinking water supplies?

The most recent testing of the base water supply for PFAS indicates that the water meets federal and state drinking water standards. Air Force service agreements with local municipal water suppliers support PFAS treatment to comply with Safe Drinking Water Act standards regulated by MassDEP and USEPA.



FTA-1 training activities on JBCC where fire-fighting foam was used.

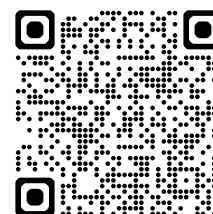
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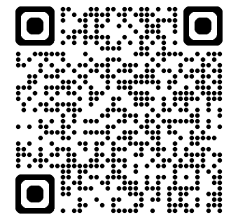
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AFCEC: <https://jbcc-iagwsp.org/community/public/irp/>
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PFAS information from the Department of War can be found at: <https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/ee/ecc/pfas/>