

Kelly Environmental Cleanup

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Is the water on the Kelly property safe to drink and where does it come from?

A: Yes, the drinking water at Kelly is safe to drink. Drinking water for the Kelly community, as well as the city of San Antonio, comes from the Edwards Aquifer not the shallow groundwater zone. The two aquifers are separated by approximately one-quarter mile of impermeable clay, ensuring drinking water is safe from any Kelly contamination.

Q: How can you be sure the water is safe to drink?

A: The Aquifer is approximately 1,500 feet below the shallow groundwater zone where the contaminants are located. The two aquifers are separated by approximately one-quarter mile of impermeable clay, ensuring drinking water is safe from any Kelly contamination.

Q: What about the soil? Is it hazardous?

A: Since the cleanup began in the 1980s, the Air Force has gathered extensive information about the locations where hazardous waste was dumped, leaked or spilled. Contaminated soil sites have been cleaned to regulatory levels and land use restrictions on digging and some types of reuse activities provide an additional level of protection for the community.

Q: Can I dig in my yard?

A: As in any community, you must first obtain permission to be sure you don't damage underground utility lines and pipelines, including those associated with the Air Force's Kelly cleanup monitoring program. Contact the dig alert phone number (800-227-2600) 48 hours before digging in your yard.

Q: If I live on Kelly can I plant a garden? Is it safe to grow vegetables, pecans and other foods, or work in the soil?

A: Yes, it is safe to plant a garden and grow vegetables. There are no restrictions within the yards of homes built on the former base, such as yours. The only possible concern is lead from lead-based paint that was on the former military houses. However, this is no different from any other site that has or had buildings built prior to 1978.

Q: [The cleanup at Kelly seems to be going on for a very long time. Why?](#)

A: Even using the best available technology, the removal of contaminants in the soil and groundwater is a time-consuming process. The cleanup process is managed to methodically achieve cleanup while avoiding unneeded expense to taxpayers, and occurs with oversight by numerous regulatory agencies to protect human health and the environment.

Q: [When did the Air Force start the cleanup and when will they be finished?](#)

A: The Air Force began cleaning up Kelly in 1982. Today, all cleanup decisions have been made and all cleanup systems are in place and working to remove contamination. The Air Force will continue with the cleanup until the job is done. Most groundwater sites will be cleaned to drinking water standards within 5 to 7 years.

Q: [Where can I get more information about the cleanup?](#)

A: You can look on our website: www.afarpa.hq.af.mil. Then, in right-hand column, select "BRAC Bases" from the pull down menu. Choose "Kelly AFB, Texas". To get on our mailing list, email afarpa.pa@us.af.mil or phone (210) 925-0956.

Q: [Is my home or business affected by the ongoing cleanup operation?](#)

A: There is no exposure to contamination at any home or business, but some homes and businesses are located close to cleanup equipment such as wells or piping.

Q: [Why is the Air Force not cleaning up Leon Creek?](#)

A: Leon Creek is an urban creek with contributing sources that can affect water and sediment quality both upstream and downstream from the former Kelly AFB. Historical trends, as well as sampling of reference creeks (Medina River, Medio Creek and Salado Creek) are evaluated to detect anything out of the ordinary. While certain chemicals may exceed Texas Water Quality Standards, detections have not shown these chemicals to exceed human health standards. Based on the Ecological Risk Assessment, approved by the TCEQ in November 2005, Leon Creek is protective to ecological receptors. Leon Creek is not an actual site where any prior industrial activity occurred, current conditions do not impact human health, and federal and state regulators do not require the Air Force to clean up Leon Creek.

Q: [Where can I access Kelly environmental reports?](#)

A: All reports are available online at <https://afarpaar.afarpa.lackland.af.mil/ar/docsearch.aspx>. Also, copies of these reports are available in the Information Repository at the San Antonio Central Library, 600 Soledad, San Antonio, TX 78205, in the government document section on the 2nd floor.

Q: [Where can I learn about health risks associated with contamination caused by the former Kelly AFB activities.](#)

A: For health-related inquiries, please visit: www.sanantonio.gov/health or contact San Antonio Metropolitan Health District at 332 W. Commerce, San Antonio, Texas 78205-2489 or call (210) 207-8780.

Q: What is the Semiannual Compliance Plan Report?

A: The former Kelly Air Force Base environmental cleanup program is regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality under the requirements of Compliance Plan CP-50310 and Permit Number HW-50310.

The compliance plan and permit, which were finalized in 1998 (and renewed Feb. 2009), require the Air Force to conduct corrective action and groundwater monitoring programs to address contamination in the shallow groundwater zone and to submit two semiannual reports covering specific activities.

Dont forget to visit us at

www.afrpa.hq.af.mil

or for Kelly AFB

<http://www.safie.hq.af.mil/afrpa/legacybrac/kelly/index.asp>