

23 November 2016

Notice to Air Force active duty and civilian members that were stationed at the former Pease Air Force Base (AFB) between 1990 and 2014

The intent of this notice is to provide information to Air Force military and civilian members stationed at the former Pease Air Force Base (Pease) between 1990 and 2014 on possible exposure to water containing chemicals of concern called perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). PFOS and PFOA are part of a larger group of chemicals called perfluorinated compounds or PFCs. You do not need to take any action at this time.

PFCs are widespread in the environment and have been used for many years in products such as stain-resistant carpet, furniture fabric treatments, older non-stick cookware, waterproof clothing, food packaging/wrapping and certain firefighting foams. PFOS and PFOA were not identified as chemicals of concern by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) until 2009, when it published drinking water provisional health advisories (PHA), due to potential risk. In May 2016, EPA issued lower lifetime health advisories (HA).

In April 2014, testing of a water well on Pease found PFOS levels exceeding the PHA; however, the PFOA levels were below the PHA. Both PFOS and PFOA exceed the lifetime health advisory established in May 2016. The well has been out of service since discovery of the levels exceeding a health advisory. The Air Force believes PFOS-containing firefighting foam used to extinguish an aircraft fire on the Pease runway in January 1990 may have contributed to a release of PFOS to the underground water source aquifer supplying drinking water for Pease. In an effort to maintain open communications about how the Air Force is addressing PFCs at Pease, the Air Force is reaching out to formerly assigned personnel to advise them of this finding.

National health surveys of random adults have shown most people have traces of PFOS and PFOA in their blood from any of a number of sources. According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), it takes approximately 4 years for PFC levels in the body to decrease by half. There are no methods to speed the process and no recommended medical exams or tests you need to complete at this time.

The Air Force is committed to protecting human health and the environment in connection with releases of PFCs. If you are interested in learning more about PFCs, to include potential health effects documents written by the EPA and the ATSDR, please visit:

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

The Air Force will update this site with additional information as it becomes available including what action, if any, you need to take.