

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Is the water supply on the former George Air Force Base property safe to drink and where does it come from?

A: Yes, the drinking water supply is safe to drink. No water from under the former base is used as drinking water. The City of Victorville is currently the former base purveyor and they get their water upstream from the former base.

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

A: The contaminated water is not used for drinking water and the contaminated water is not located in areas where drinking water is obtained. Wells providing drinking water are tested regularly, and annual water quality reports are provided to water customers as required by law. In addition, the Air Force samples the water from their monitoring well network of over 280 wells every six months to monitor the movement and concentrations of the contaminated water. This process is overseen by regional, state and federal regulators. Further, it is prohibited to install wells in the contaminated areas.

Q: What about the soil? Is it hazardous?

A: Since the cleanup began in the 1980s, the Air Force has gathered extensive information about locations where hazardous waste was dumped, leaked or spilled. Many sites were cleaned up by excavation and off-site disposal at regulated facilities. The Air Force used Soil Vapor Extraction (SVE) at nine sites to remove solvents and jet fuels. All but one SVE system have been turned off. The remaining system currently operates at the former base fuel storage and distribution facility along the flight line and fire training areas to address fuel contamination, and near maintenance hangars for solvent contamination.

Five landfills were used for waste disposal at the former base. The Air Force capped these landfills to prevent rainwater percolating through them into the groundwater. Monitoring wells in the vicinity ensure contaminants from the landfills do not migrate to adjacent property or leach into groundwater.

Q: When I drive around George, I see signs for cleanup systems and I see piping and equipment. What is coming out of these and is it dangerous to breathe?

A: The soil vapor extraction (SVE) system located throughout the former base discharges treated air extracted from subsurface soil. The treated air is monitored and tested monthly to ensure that it complies with regulatory and air emission permit requirements. The low concentrations emitted in the treated air do not pose a significant health threat and are also released from exhaust stacks that carry the treated air away from ground level. The cleanup efforts at the former George AFB do not make the air at George dangerous

or unhealthy in any way.

Q: The cleanup at George seems to be going on for a very long time. Why?

A: Even using the best available cleanup technologies, the removal of contaminants in the soil and groundwater is a time-consuming process. The cleanup process is carefully managed to methodically achieve cleanup while avoiding unneeded expense to taxpayers. Numerous regulatory agencies closely oversee this cleanup process to ensure protection of human health and the environment. Additionally, there's an EPA requirement for review every five years to make sure the remedies remain protective.

Q: Is my workplace affected by the ongoing cleanup operation?

A: There is no exposure or increased health risk from cleanup operations at any workplace on the former George AFB. Some businesses are located close to cleanup equipment such as wells or piping, and must take care not to damage or disturb these.

Q: Where can I get more information about the cleanup?

A: You can look on our website: <http://www.afcec.af.mil/brac/george/index.asp>. Or you may contact the AFCEC Public Affairs Office at (916) 643-1250 x257 for more information or to be added to our mailing list.

