

Statement on the Department's PFAS Cleanup Progress
by the Honorable Brendan Owens
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations & Environment
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The Department takes its environmental cleanup responsibilities seriously and I believe it is important to continue the dialogue about the progress we are making to address PFAS. This is a complex issue and one the Department is continuously working on to accelerate our cleanups and demonstrate more effective and efficient management of our cleanup process. DoD's PFAS Task Force is issuing new policies and guidance to achieve this. These actions illustrate the Department's sustained commitment to resolving complex cleanup actions at DoD installations.

Last week, the DoD PFAS Task Force released three significant PFAS guidance documents. The first guidance expedites cleanup actions by prioritizing interim actions to address PFAS migration from DoD installations and National Guard facilities, where supported by site-specific information. Examples of these interim cleanup actions include removal of soil "hot spots" and installation of groundwater extraction systems to mitigate further PFAS plume migration or ongoing impacts to groundwater from an on-base PFAS source area. With this guidance, the Department is prioritizing cleanup in communities with the highest risk of exposure.

The second document is an interim disposal guidance to assist the DoD Components in making informed decisions in the evaluation of existing PFAS destruction and disposal options.

The interim disposal guidance identifies the following four commercially available options, in the order of consideration. All four DoD-wide options include environmental permits from a state or federal regulatory agency:

1. Carbon reactivation (for granular activated carbon used in water treatment only).
2. Hazardous waste landfills.
3. Solid waste landfills that meet additional requirements.
4. Hazardous waste incinerators.

DoD Components will also consider, on a site-specific basis, onsite hazardous waste storage, underground injection control, and environmentally permitted or accepted technologies instead of incineration. High temperature incineration is the last option, but remains an effective destruction option. DoD continues to evaluate existing and developing PFAS destruction and disposal technologies, monitor studies on those technologies' effectiveness and potential environmental effects, and collaborate Administration-wide on best practices. This guidance is interim because it will be updated annually to reflect changes as technologies mature, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updates its guidance, and additional data becomes

available. While DoD has issued this guidance, additional planning is needed and DoD will not resume incineration for a minimum of 45 days. The Department will provide notice on DoD's PFAS website at least two weeks before the Department begins using incineration as a disposal option.

The third document updates existing guidance concerning the periodic sampling and monitoring of DoD-owned drinking water systems for PFAS worldwide. In anticipation of EPA establishing drinking water standards for certain PFAS and to ensure that the Department makes decisions based on drinking water samples that have been collected and analyzed using the most current methods, this guidance requires the DoD Components to review existing data and collect additional samples from DoD-owned drinking water systems using the most recent EPA analytical methods for drinking water. The guidance also includes requirements for periodic sampling and data reporting. These results will be available to the public on DoD's PFAS website.

Over the next few weeks/months the PFAS Task Force plans to release additional DoD guidance on a variety of PFAS-related topics to include:

- *Update on screening methods for PFAS – In an effort to accelerate the investigation of PFAS, this memorandum allows for the use of alternative methods of analysis to screen samples for the presence or magnitude of PFAS concentration. The use of these screening methods will allow for more rapid turnaround of sampling results to determine where further investigation is needed.*
- *Updated Regional Screening Level (RSL) policy – This policy will update the current RSL memorandum to reflect the most recent additions to EPA's RSL tables for certain PFAS and to ensure that these screening values are used consistently at DoD cleanup locations.*
- *Review of data and sampling policy for PFAS migration from DoD installations - In anticipation of EPA establishing drinking water standards for certain PFAS, this memorandum directs DoD Components to review existing data and develop plans for incorporating EPA's National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, once final, into DoD's cleanup process.*
- *Data Sharing for DoD Cleanups - The Department supports transparency, concerning its PFAS drinking water sampling results, to both the state regulatory agencies as well as the restoration advisory board members. This guidance will clarify the information that can be released to facilitate information sharing and ensure transparency, while protecting personally identifiable information.*

In addition to all of this work, we are continuing our *Environmental Cleanup Communication and Outreach Initiative (ECCOI)*. We are striving for transparency in what we are doing to enhance communication with impacted communities, and we will publish the interim summary from the first set of installation visits within the next few weeks. While we are continuing our site visits, the Department would like to expand the ability for additional community members to provide their perspective. DoD will soon launch a communication survey on our website where additional community members can voluntarily share their views. We are also continuing our work to develop products to assist in explaining technical and scientific information to our communities in plain language. For example, a brochure is in progress which will better illustrate and explain the cleanup process and why it can often take a significant amount of time.

The policies mentioned here as well as all other PFAS-related policies can be found on the PFAS website. We will also continue to provide periodic updates on the PFAS website (www.defense.gov/PFAS) as additional information becomes available.

I look forward to strengthening relationships with communities through future conversations, communication, and outreach activities.