



## ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3500 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3500

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MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (INSTALLATIONS,  
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (ENERGY,  
INSTALLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT)  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
(INSTALLATIONS, ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY)  
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU (JOINT STAFF, J8)  
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

SUBJECT: Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Communications between Installations and  
their Communities on and off the Installation

The Secretary of Defense created a Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Task Force to address growing concerns over releases of these substances and the effects on military installations and their surrounding communities. PFAS is a national issue that needs national solutions. We have a responsibility to take care of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardsmen, their families, and the communities surrounding our installations. I expect our Installation Commanding Officers (ICOs) and their senior leadership to be knowledgeable of our coordinated, aggressive, and holistic approach to addressing PFAS issues and communicate these issues on and off the installation.

Attached is a Briefing Card to be distributed to each of your ICOs for their education and to support communications with our on and off-installation communities. ICOs should also use information posted on the Department of Defense (DoD) PFAS webpage ([www.defense.gov/pfas](http://www.defense.gov/pfas)). I expect each installation to use their location specific communication mechanisms as the basis for communicating DoD's PFAS efforts locally. I also expect the level of communication and outreach to be based on each installation's degree of historic PFAS use and/or release to the environment. For example, an installation that has not historically used, stored, or released PFAS to the environment might simply share that fact, as well as the higher level national efforts and messages coupled with the factual information regarding the lack of PFAS releases from the installation. Whereas, an installation with known use and release of PFAS and migration off installation to public or private drinking water wells, would require a substantially higher level of communication and community engagement supported by federal, state, and local regulatory and health agencies.

Attached is a spreadsheet with two overarching purposes. First is to document that each of our installations has conducted appropriate, measured PFAS engagements with their stakeholders. Second is to gather feedback regarding the level of outreach or outreach activities and to report back community questions and/or concerns requiring further response. The first report is due back to my office by January 30, 2020, and subsequent reports are due 30 days after the end of each quarter for one calendar year.

My point of contact is Chuck Prichard, who can be reached at charles.l.prichard.civ@mail.mil or 703-692-5282.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. McMahon', is written over a solid horizontal line.

Robert H. McMahon

Attachment: As stated

# BRIEFING CARD

November 21, 2019 DRAFT  
Addressing PFAS

## Top Line Messages

- PFAS is a national issue that needs national solutions.
- DoD's priority is to quickly address PFOS and PFOA in drinking water from DoD activities.
- The Department has three goals: mitigate and eliminate the use of AFFF; better understand the impacts of PFAS on human health; and fulfill our cleanup responsibility related to PFAS.
- The Department remains committed to the health and safety of our men and women in uniform, their families, and the communities in which we serve.

## Figures

- DOD identified 401 installations with known or suspected releases of PFOS/PFOA.
- DOD tested its 524 DoD-operated drinking water systems
  - 24 DOD drinking water systems tested above EPA's health advisory.
  - DOD took quick action at these 24 locations to reduce levels below the health advisory.
  - The 24 installations, along with the test results and actions taken, are available online: <https://www.denix.osd.mil/derp/home/documents/pfos-pfoa-briefing-to-the-hasc/>.
- PFOS/PFOA cleanup spending: Through the end of FY2018, DOD has obligated approximately \$550 million.
- Overall FY2020 cleanup budget request: \$1.3 billion.
- Research and Development
  - Since 2011, DoD has initiated more than 100 projects with a total investment of approximately \$100 million.
  - Close to \$80 million has been invested to date addressing characterization, toxicity, and treatment of PFAS.
  - \$22 million has been invested for the development of new, fluorine-free firefighting agents.

## Talking Points

- PFAS is a national issue that needs national regulatory solutions. PFAS is found in everyday consumer items—from nonstick cookware to water-resistant clothing. It is also found in certain firefighting foam, known as aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF).

- In 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a lifetime drinking water health advisory for PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) of 70 parts per trillion. PFOS and PFOA are only two of the hundreds of PFAS chemicals widely-used throughout the U.S.
- DOD supports EPA establishing objective, science-based regulatory standards.
- On his first day in office, Secretary Esper established a DoD PFAS Task Force to ensure a consistent and proactive approach throughout DoD to address PFAS. DoD is committed to being a part of the national solution to PFAS, in coordination with the many other federal agencies that are addressing PFAS.
- DoD has taken action to address PFOS and PFOA:
  - Our priority is to quickly address PFOS and PFOA in drinking water from DoD activities, under the federal cleanup law.
  - No one is drinking water above the Environmental Protection Agency's lifetime health advisory level where DoD is the known source.
- DOD tested its 524 DoD-operated drinking water systems and 24 tested above EPA's health advisory. DOD took quick action at these 24 locations to reduce levels below the health advisory.
- Activities funded by DoD include, replacing and disposing of legacy supplies of AFFF with PFOS, research and development related to PFAS, and cleanup activities such as providing alternate drinking water.
- DoD is one of many users of AFFF, with other major users including commercial airports, the oil and gas industry, and local fire departments. AFFF is mission critical and protects DoD Service members by rapidly extinguishing dangerous fuel fires.
- DoD only uses AFFF to respond to emergency events and no longer uses it for land-based testing and training. The Department treats each use of AFFF as a spill response, containing the foam to limit environmental effects.
- Since 2011, DoD has funded over 100 research projects with an investment of approximately \$100M to date, addressing characterization, toxicity, and treatment of PFAS, as well as development of new, fluorine-free firefighting agents.

## About the PFAS Task Force

- The Secretary of Defense established the DoD PFAS Task Force in a July 23, 2019 memo. The Operating Principles for the PFAS Task Force identify six focus areas:
  - Health aspects
  - Cleanup standards and performance
  - Finding/funding an effective substitute firefighting foam without PFAS
  - Science-supported standards for exposure and cleanup
  - Interagency coordination
  - Communications to the Public and Congress
- A copy of the SECDEF memo is available online:  
<https://media.defense.gov/2019/Aug/09/2002169524/-1/-1/1/PER-AND-POLYFLUOROALKYL-SUBSTANCES-TASK-FORCE.PDF>

- A copy of the Task Force Operating Principles are available online:  
<https://media.defense.gov/2019/Sep/17/2002183580/-1/-1/1/PFAS-TASK-FORCE-OPERATING-PRINCIPLES-SECDEF-APPROVED-SEPT-13-2019.PDF>

## **Background/Additional Information**

- PFOS and PFOA are part of a class of man-made chemicals used in many industrial and consumer products. Perfluorinated compounds such as PFOS and PFOA were used to make coatings and products that are oil and water repellent such as for carpets, clothing, paper packaging for food, and cookware. They were also contained in foams (aqueous film-forming foam or AFFF) used for fighting petroleum fires at airfields and in industrial processes because it rapidly extinguishes the fire, saving lives and protecting property.
- DoD is supporting the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) efforts to conduct an exposure assessment at 8 military installations and a multi-site health study, as required by the FY2018 NDAA.
- The Navy has updated the Military Specification for AFFF to set limits for PFOS and PFOA at the lowest limits of quantitation (e.g. detection limits) and removed the requirement for a fluorinated surfactant (e.g. fluorine). The latest version is on-line at <https://quicksearch.dla.mil/qsSearch.aspx>. (In the "Document Number" Box, Type "24385" and press the "Search" button).
- The Military Departments are switching out AFFF from firefighting systems and backup storage lockers to ensure only the new Military Specification for AFFF without detectable PFOS or PFOA is available for emergency firefighting responses.

**Coordinated with: DASD Environment/OGC**

**Prepared by:** Mr. Chuck Prichard/OSD(PA)/(703) 692-5282

