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Drinking Water

U.S. Army Garrison
RHEINLAND-PFALZ

Drinking Water Monitoring

Providing a Safe Environment for our Community

The Environmental Final Governing Standards – Germany (GFGS) (DoD, 2017) require that drinking water be periodically analyzed for selected chemical, physical, and radiological water quality parameters.

At the request of Installation Management Command – Europe (IMCOM-E), Public Health Command Europe (PHCE) collects drinking water samples at U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Rheinland-Pfalz in support of these requirements.

DPW is responsible for DoD public water systems and is also required to establish and maintain bacteriological monitoring and operational monitoring programs in accordance with GFGS.

ROUTINE WATER TESTING PARAMETERS

- Legionella Bacteria
- Lead and Copper in Drinking Water
- Total Coliforms
- E. Coli
- pH, Chlorine, Turbidity
- Fluoride, Chlorine dioxide
- Inorganics
- Metals
- Nitrate & Nitrite
- PAHs (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons)
- VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds)
- Pesticides & PCB's (Polychlorinated Biphenyls)
- Other Organics
- TTHM (Total Trihalomethanes)
- HAA5 (Haloacetic Acids (Five))
- Radionuclides
- Asbestos

Drinking water in Germany is subject to the strictest controls.

No other food product has as many regulations to comply with.

Water quality for U.S. installations in Germany has to meet German standards as well as Final Governing Standards.

Self-help

Guidelines for Drinking Water

Do it Yourself Suggestions

CLEAN OR REPLACE AERATOR

A faucet aerator is a water saving fixture that can be installed on a faucet to reduce the water flow. An aerator works like a filter that forces the water to come out in droplets, but also catches small particles that might be transported through the water lines . To avoid accumulation of those particles, which could result in elevated readings for some water parameters, the aerator should be cleaned or replaced from time to time. The Garrisons self-help offers aerators for free.

PREVENT STAGNATION

Only clear, fresh water should be used for drinking, cooking or food preparation.

The drinking water quality changes during the transport through distribution systems. Domestic drinking water systems are the most critical points in which water quality may be affected. Temperature and water stagnation affect both chemical and microbial quality of the drinking water.

LET WATER RUN

- Every morning before use until the water is constantly cold
- After 4 hours without usage until the water is constantly cold
- After a longer absence (vacation etc.) let all taps run for the minimum of 5 min.

Periodic flushing of under utilized water supply lines is performed by DPW regularly to avoid volatilizing of Chlorine and to help reduce sedimentation and turbidity in general.

Lead in Drinking Water

Lead Testing at Army Installations

Water testing has always been conducted regularly at Army installations in accordance with federal, state and local standards. But new guidance — developed by Army Environmental Command and the Army Public Health Center — improves sampling processes and expands sampling across Army family housing for lead content. Lead in water is tested at high-risk facilities, defined as those providing drinking water to children under age six and pregnant mothers. High-risk facilities include child development centers, youth centers and schools.

If lead is found at any water outlet at levels above 15 parts per billion (ppb), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends taking action to reduce the lead.

LEAD SOURCES

Lead can enter drinking water through corrosion of plumbing materials. Lead discovered in water samples stems most often from plumbing materials such as water fixtures with shredded threads.

TESTING PROCEDURE

- DPW tests a collection of three samples. The first tests water immediately coming out of a faucet. The second is collected 30 seconds after the water has run. The third sample is collected two minutes after the water has run.
- Each sampling event takes approximately 10 minutes per housing unit. DPW staff personally notify residents and immediately take corrective measures if they detect higher-than-normal levels of lead in your water.

Information and Reporting

Notification Procedures

ICE and More

NOTIFICATION

In the event that the U.S. Army Garrison Rheinland-Pfalz will conduct any routine or on demand testing for any water parameters in your homes a notification letter from the Housing, Utilities or the Environmental Management Division will be issued to residents during the testing period. Collection methods differ for each water parameter and some buildings may be subject to several testings and some might not be effected at all.

REPORTING

All community members are encouraged to report any deficiencies in water quality. Please take the time to provide your observations on ICE (Interactive Customer Evaluation).

GARRISON WEB PAGE

On the Garrison web page you can find more detailed information on water quality related topics, like a Legionella information page and Frequently asked Questions (FAQ).

https://home.army.mil/rheinland-pfalz

Discoloration of Water

Why is my Water White From Time to Time?

White discoloration in water can be caused by trapped air, this is completely harmless. The air can be introduced into the water supply following repair work on the distribution network in the internal domestic pipe work , or by a pocket of air becoming trapped in the internal domestic pipe work.

Aerated water has a cloudy or milky white appearance. To confirm that the cloudiness is caused by trapped air, fill a glass of water from the cold tap in the kitchen and watch how it clears from the bottom of the glass upward. It can take up to 10 minutes to clear. Any air trapped in the mains should clear within 2 to 3 hours.

Why is my Water Brown, Orange or Yellow?

The most common cause of brown/yellow or orange water is suspended particulate iron, which is dislodged from walls of cast iron water mains. These deposits can become dislodged by hydraulic changes within the mains network.

Another reason for "brown water" can also be stagnant water. The condition of internal plumbing inside buildings can result in periods of brown water when fresh water gets mixed with stagnant water within the pipe system.

- Typically the problem resolves in an hour or two after the disturbance is finished.
- To clear the system run the affected tap for two to three minutes.
- Contact DPW in case "brown" water comes out of the faucet, even after flushing lines.

Legionella Bacteria

Annual Testing Requirements

Prevention and Mitigation

TESTING REQUIREMENT

Environmental Final Governing Standards for Germany require the annual monitoring of bathroom showers for Legionella bacteria throughout USAG RP and U.S. Army garrisons across Germany to include on-post housing and tenant unit buildings.

PREVENTION

The water heaters in our homes bring the levels of Legionella usually down to zero. Legionella cannot survive at temperatures over 60° C.

OCCURENCE

Legionella is a type of bacterium found naturally in freshwater environments, like lakes and streams. It can become a health concern when it grows in high concentrations in human-made water systems that can aerosolize from water, such as during use of contaminated shower heads and humidifiers.

Legionella Information Page

The Garrison webpage provides additional information about Legionella, the testing schedule for 2019 and FAQs.

ACTION LEVELS

- Up to 100 CFUs/ml (Colony Forming Units) of bacteria requires no action
- Above 100, but below 10,000 CFUs/ml of bacteria requires DPW to perform heating and flushing of building water systems. Water can still be consumed (drinking and cooking) and used for bathing purposes.
- Levels above 10,000 CFUs/ml of bacteria requires DPW to perform heating and flushing of building water systems. Residents can continue consuming their water (drinking and cooking), but must refrain from using the water for bathing (showers and baths).