

Query from Yakima Herald-Republic – deadline is 1 p.m., Friday, May 19, 2023

Questions and Answers:

Q1: Does the Army know how many households agreed to have whole-house filters installed?

A1: We are still early in the process of identifying locations where Point of Entry Treatment (POET) filtration systems are a viable solution to replace bottled water.

Q2: Have all households eligible for the filters been contacted even if just for an initial inspection?

A2: In-home assessments of drinking water wells with PFAS levels above 70 ppt were conducted in February 2023.

Q3: What about the hydrogeology near the Yakima Training Center makes it difficult to determine the best ways to distribute aid to residents affected by the well water contamination?

A3: Extensive folding of the sedimentary and Columbia River basalt in the area has created a complex groundwater system with a wide range of hydraulic properties, depths to water, and flow directions. This makes the hydrogeology in and around Yakima Training Center highly unique and complex.

Q4: Will the Army be reassessing who is eligible for aid after the EPA sets its federal PFAS regulation in the next year? Is there a possibility of aid being distributed to more households under the new regulation?

A4: The Department of Defense respects and values the public comment process on this proposed nationwide drinking water rule and looks forward to the clarity that a final regulatory drinking water standard for PFAS will provide. In anticipation of the final standard that the Environmental Protection Agency expects to publish by the end of 2023, the Department is assessing what actions DoD can take to be prepared to incorporate EPA's final regulatory standard into our current cleanup process, such as reviewing our existing data and conducting additional sampling where necessary. In addition, DoD will incorporate nationwide PFAS cleanup guidance, issued by EPA and applicable to all owners and operators under the federal cleanup law, as to when to provide alternate water when PFAS are present.

Q5: Along that same thread, if a new batch of households become eligible for aid under the new regulations, will they be reimbursed for expenses related to the contamination like the purchase of filters for example?

A5: The Department of Defense will incorporate nationwide PFAS cleanup guidance, issued by EPA and applicable to all owners and operators under the federal cleanup law, as to when to provide alternate water when PFAS are present. There is no policy in place to allow the Army to reimburse residents who install their own filtration systems.

Q6: In September the Army said there were no further plans for additional testing or retesting. What role is it playing in the retesting of water wells in the area at the end of this month?

A6: The Army is taking split samples with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology at several homes selected by the EPA. The Army will determine need and frequency of additional sampling both on the Yakima Training Center installation and in the community outside its gates as part of the on-going remedial investigation.

Q7: I have spoken to residents who have nowhere to dispose of used water filters containing PFAS. Some landfills won't take them and many don't want to simply throw them in with the rest of their garbage. Is the Army providing any sort of guidance on how to dispose of these filters?

A7: I would refer you to the Washington Department of Ecology who implements federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), or the Environmental Protection Agency for information on the household waste exclusion found in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 261.4, covering wastes generated by typical household activities (e.g., routine house and yard maintenance). That exclusion can be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-01/documents/rcra2614b-ref.pdf>.

For specific questions regarding alternative means of filter disposal I would refer you to Yakima Health District or the Yakima County Moderate Risk Waste facility.

Q8: Is there a safe method of disposal in place for when the army begins distributing point-of-use filters?

A8: See previous answer.

Q9: When will the results for the new monitoring wells installed at the Yakima Training Center start coming in? Will those results be made available to the public?

A9: Once documents are finalized, they are publicly available at the Yakima Valley Regional Library and are posted on the Washington State Department of Ecology website.

Q10: Are there plans for any upcoming public meetings or informational meetings for residents? A resident told me they'd heard there might be a townhall in June so I wanted to know if that or something similar was the case.

A10: Additional informational meetings will be scheduled in the future. We will notify the public and the media when the next meeting is scheduled.

Q11: Does the Army plan to retest the 300 homes it tested between 2021 and 2022? Does it plan to test beyond these homes?

A11: Currently, there are no plans to retest all homes that were already sampled, though the Army will evaluate the need and frequency of additional testing as part of the on-going remedial investigation.

Q12: Are there any plans to test surface waters like nearby sections of the Yakima River, canals and finishing ponds in the area?

A12: There are currently no plans in place for the Army to test surface water outside of Yakima Training Center.