



# NEWS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

**92nd Air Refueling Wing (AMC)**  
Office of Public Affairs  
1 E. Bong St., Suite 228  
Fairchild AFB, WA 99011-9588  
(509) 247-5705

Homepage <http://www.fairchild.af.mil>  
E-mail [92arw.pa@us.af.mil](mailto:92arw.pa@us.af.mil)  
Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/FairchildAFB>  
Twitter @TeamFairchild

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## **Fairchild partners with Airway Heights to provide water to residents affected by water advisory**

**AIRWAY HEIGHTS, Wash.** – Fairchild Airmen joined City of Airway Heights officials and volunteers to hand out 24,000 gallons of bottled water procured by the Air Force that arrived today in Airway Heights.

The water is being distributed to city residents impacted by the city's advisory not to consume tap water.

The city has provided bottled water since Tuesday evening and the Air Force and the city plan to provide bottled water to affected residents until the city's water supply is back on line and the advisory is lifted.

"We are working closely with our partners in Airway Heights to find immediate and long-term solutions to ensure the health and wellbeing of our families, neighbors and community members," said Col. Ryan Samuelson, Fairchild Air Force Base commander. "As I have always stated, we are committed to transparency as we work with our local and regional partners to respond to the current situation and to investigate the extent of the PFOS/PFOA contamination and which military and non-military sources contributed to it. However, this investigation is not going to delay our assistance to the community. We will be out there with all the other community volunteers distributing water and answering questions."

The advisory was issued Tuesday by City of Airway Heights officials out of an abundance of caution after preliminary results of sampling conducted by Fairchild AFB indicated wells that supply the Airway Heights water system contained Perfluorooctanesulfonic (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic acids (PFOA) concentrations above the EPA's lifetime Health Advisory levels.

City officials stated Tuesday they are taking a number of steps in the short term to reduce levels of PFOS/PFOA in the city's water supply. Upon being notified of the sampling results, the city immediately ceased operation of the affected wells and began using the city's water system inter-tie connection with the City of Spokane. Additionally, the city has initiated a flushing routine to remove water with higher concentrations of PFOS/PFOA from the system with the intent of

reducing levels of PFOS/PFOA from the city's water system to safe levels within approximately 10 days.

The EPA's HA levels are based on cumulative lifetime exposure from water ingestion, not from skin contact or breathing water vapor, which are not considered to be unsafe. Tap water is deemed safe by the EPA for activities where water will not be ingested, such as bathing, doing laundry and washing dishes.

PFOS/PFOAs are unregulated compounds that are classified by the EPA as "emerging contaminants" and are present in many common household items and heat and fire resistant products, including aqueous film forming foam formulations that were used by the Air Force in fire trucks from 1970-2016, including at Fairchild AFB. The EPA issued updated PFOS/PFOA lifetime health advisory levels to 70 parts-per-trillion in May of 2016.

Fairchild officials, along with local and regional regulatory partners, have scheduled a public meeting May 23 at 6:00 p.m. in the Medical Lake High School auditorium to allow community members to learn more about this topic. Subject-matter experts will be on hand to provide additional information and address questions and concerns.

More information on PFOS/PFOA and the ongoing response efforts can be found here:

<http://www.fairchild.af.mil/PFOS-PFOA-INFO/>

<http://www.cawh.org/departments/public-works/water-reports/water-quality-2017>

<http://www.afcec.af.mil/WhatWeDo/Environment/Perfluorinated-Compounds/>

[www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfass-under-tsca](http://www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfass-under-tsca)

For more information, contact the Fairchild AFB Public Affairs office at (509) 247-5705 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., or email [92arw.pa@us.af.mil](mailto:92arw.pa@us.af.mil); or, you can obtain information from the City of Airway Heights by calling 211.