



May 8, 2009 Update to the 1997 Camp Lejeune Public Health Assessment

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has removed the 1997 Camp Lejeune Public Health Assessment (PHA) from this web site.

In the 12 years since the 1997 PHA was published, additional information has emerged related to exposures to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in drinking water at Camp Lejeune. Due in part to ATSDR's ongoing extensive water modeling and exposure reconstruction study, we have learned that communities serviced by the Holcomb Boulevard distribution system were exposed to contaminated water for a longer period than we knew in 1997. Also, at the Camp Lejeune site, benzene was present in one drinking-water supply well in the Hadnot Point drinking water system. That well was shut down sometime prior to 1985. This information should have been included in the PHA but was not. The PHA should have mentioned the contamination and stated that the extent of exposure to benzene from that well was unknown.

At this time, ATSDR has insufficient information to determine if children or adults were adversely affected by these exposures. ATSDR is conducting studies to determine if past exposures to VOCs from contaminated drinking water are associated with certain birth defects and childhood cancers among children born to parents who were living at Camp Lejeune. Additional epidemiologic studies are being pursued to evaluate illnesses among adults who lived on the base.

The PHA spurred beneficial public health research, including the ongoing water modeling, exposure reconstruction, and epidemiological studies. Although the drinking water section needs to be updated, the PHA contains valuable and accurate historical information about nine other exposure pathways. Much of what we now know about the potential for adverse health effects related to exposures at Camp Lejeune is owed to this 1997 document. We are currently studying the extent of benzene and other VOC contamination in the Hadnot Point drinking water system. Once we have completed the water modeling and exposure reconstruction studies, ATSDR will re-analyze the drinking water pathway for the Camp Lejeune site, communicate findings to the public, and update the public health assessment.

Exposures to VOCs in the drinking water occurred at Camp Lejeune. ATSDR declared those past exposures a public health hazard and we maintain that position today. Persons interested in reading the PHA may request a printed copy by contacting the ATSDR Records Center by telephone at 770-488-0707 or by e-mail at atsdrrecordscenter@cdc.gov.

We will post additional study progress updates to this web page as they become available.

For more information about ATSDR's activities at Camp Lejeune, please visit <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/Lejeune/index.html>