

MIDLANT Region shares results of water testing at child care locations

By David Todd | Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Public Affairs | Posted: Thursday, March 28, 2013 2:38 pm

NORFOLK -- Officials from Joint Expeditionary Base (JEB) Little Creek-Fort Story and Naval Station (NAVSTA) Norfolk notified parents and staff members that samples from two child development centers tested positive for higher than U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended levels of lead in their water, March 28.

NAVSTA Norfolk and Joint Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Mid-Atlantic, under direction of Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, began testing for evidence of lead at drinking water outlets inside 23 child care facilities in Hampton Roads, including Child Development Centers, 24/7 Child Care facilities and Youth Centers, in September of 2012.

“The safety of our service members, staff members and their children are our top priority,” said Rear Adm. Tim Alexander, Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic. “We are committed to ensuring that our drinking water meets both the Navy and EPA environmental standards, and we will provide the best possible level of care that our service members and their families deserve.”

To date, nearly 300 water outlets have been individually tested at nine facilities onboard JEB Little Creek-Fort Story and NAVSTA Norfolk.

JEB Fort Story Child Development Center (CDC) collected 58 total samples, in which five initially tested above the Navy and EPA standards. Four locations were used for storage and one location was a kitchen faucet intended for use by adults to only rinse dishes before placing them in the dishwasher. All five were immediately secured and corrective action was taken. After an additional test, all outlets tested within recommended levels.

Tests at NAVSTA Norfolk CDC on Hampton Blvd. resulted in seven of 72 water outlets that tested above the recommended level. Two of these were water fountains accessible to children. The other five areas were sinks used for hand washing. They were immediately secured. The second set of test results were delivered on March 26 and remained above recommended levels. The drinking fountains where children had access have been removed from the facility.

“I recognize that much of this information might be hard to understand, for those of us that don’t deal in this type of science every day,” said Alexander. “As a parent myself, I understand the full range of emotions that our CDC parents must be feeling. My staff, as well as the commanding officers of both bases, are helping them through this process – I will ensure they get the answers they need.”

Follow-on information sessions will be hosted at both CDCs, providing families an opportunity to speak with medical representatives, have questions answered and voice concerns.

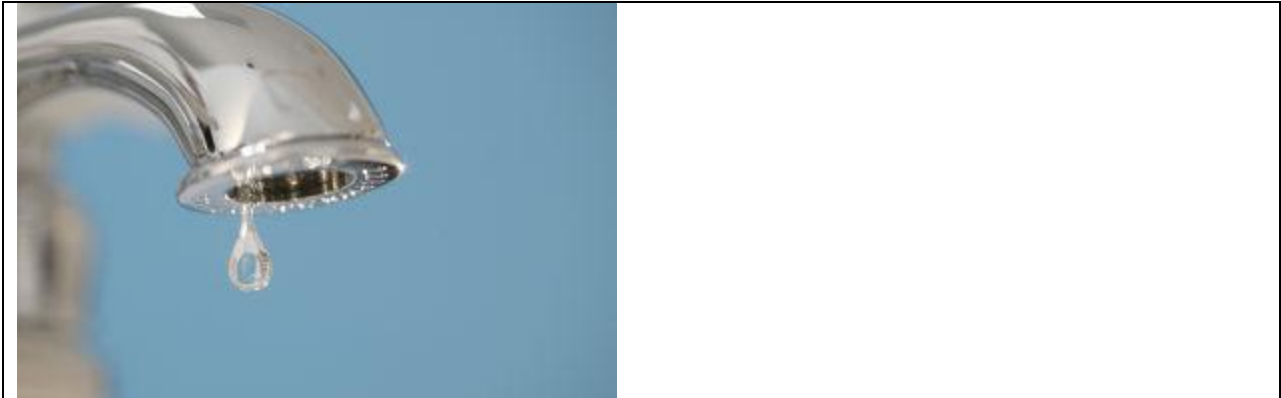
The proactive testing was conducted at the CDCs and Youth Centers primarily because children are more sensitive to lead exposure than adults.

The EPAs Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was originally passed by Congress in 1974 to protect public health by regulating the nation’s public drinking water supply. The law was amended in 1986 and 1996, and requires many actions to protect drinking water and its sources – rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs and ground water wells. (SDWA does not regulate private wells which serve fewer than 25 individuals.)

NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic will continue to monitor the water quality at the CDCs, as well as conduct on-site testing at an additional 14 facilities in Hampton Roads.

For parents who have questions or concerns should contact their healthcare provider. Additionally, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth has established a Lead Information Line at (757) 953-1598.

To learn more about lead in drinking water, visit <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/lead/>, call (800) 424-LEAD, or call the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.



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