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Warner criticizes military's delay in testing drinking water

by 13News

WVEC.com

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WASHINGTON--Sen. Mark Warner is questioning the military's safeguards against lead in drinking water at its facilities.

Warner's comments came after unsafe levels of lead in drinking water were found at two Navy child care centers in Hampton Roads last week.

In a letter to Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Warner raised concerns over the apparent five-year delay between an Oct. 2007 Pentagon mandate to test lead in drinking water fixtures and the initiation of testing at Hampton Roads facilities in October 2012 saying, "This is not acceptable."

According to Warner's office, the senator asked Hagel for assurance that everything possible was being done to protect military families from elevated levels of lead. Warner urged Hagel to confirm that appropriate testing has occurred at other military facilities across all branches of the military.

During routine testing of nearly 300 water outlets at nine centers, the Navy discovered elevated levels at a center outside Naval Station Norfolk on Hampton Boulevard and at the Fort Story side of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story.

The voluntary EPA standards recommends a lead level of no higher than 20 parts per billion, which is said to be equivalent to 20 eye drops in an Olympics-sized pool. The testing showed a highest level of 66 parts per billion.

Lead exposure has been found to cause serious medical issues including permanent damage to the brain and nervous system, which can result in behavioral and learning problems.

Following the discovery of elevated lead levels last week, the Navy said installation commanding officers, day care center management, environmental and health specialists were available to meet individually with parents and employees to provide results of the tests and have their questions and concerns addressed.

Warner praised the, "aggressive and proactive response by the Hampton Roads Navy command following last week's reports."?

Click here to read a copy of the letter from Sen. Warner to Secretary Hagel.

Source: <http://www.wvec.com/news/Va-senator-wants-assurance-Navy-families-are-safe-from-lead-in-their-water-201494771.html>

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