Unified Command established for Brunswick AFFF release

August 21, 2024

A Unified Command and Joint Information Center was established in Brunswick, Maine, yesterday to coordinate response and disseminate information about Monday's aqueous firefight foam (AFFF) release.

The Unified Command includes the:

- Maine Department of Environmental Protection
- Maine Department of Health and Human Services' Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Town of Brunswick

U.S. Coast Guard

The Unified Command will hold a press conference this afternoon, August 21, 2024, at:

Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority

15 Terminal Road, Suite 200, Brunswick, ME 04011

Press conference will begin at 3:00 PM.

On August 19, 2024, Maine DEP was notified by the Brunswick Fire Department that approximately 1450 gallons mixed with 50,000 gallons of AFFF was released at the Brunswick Executive Airport from Hangar 4.The release made its way into an oil/water separator and into retention pond "A". Immediately upon obtaining this information DEP sent Emergency Responders from the Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management to the site to work on site stabilization and cleanup. In addition, DEP also sent staff from its Division of Technical Services to take samples and evaluate the likelihood of impacts to any nearby private drinking water wells. Because the location is part of an ongoing Federal clean-up site, DEP also sent staff from the Division of Remediation to coordinate with existing federal partners at the DoD (Navy) and USEPA.

On Monday afternoon, four samples were collected to evaluate immediate impacts to the environment and understand the potential for impacts to ground water. DEP has been in direct contact with contracted laboratories to expedite return of sample results (normally a month turn around) to get results in as early as Friday.

Many samples have been taken at this location over the past several years as part of the ongoing Federal cleanup activities, and this data does not definitively confirm a connection between the contaminated site and nearby private drinking water wells.

However, because this data is a few years old and because this is a new spill of PFAS, the DEP in an abundance of caution is developing a sampling and analysis plan to take additional samples to determine whether any nearby wells have been impacted by this most recent spill. Department staff will be reaching out to some residents in the nearby community to request permission to conduct sampling of private drinking water wells.

The Department will not be sampling every single well in the community. Instead, representative samples will be taken to understand what is happening with groundwater flow and migration. This will help expedite an understanding of what is happening in relation to drinking water in the nearby neighborhoods.

The Department is working with multiple partner agencies and authorities on this matter including DoD (Navy and US Coast Guard), USEPA, MEMA, DHHS (CDC and Drinking Water Program), DMR, Town of Brunswick, and MRRA.

Residents who want to sample their own private drinking water wells can follow water sampling guidance from DEP.

The Maine CDCs Drinking Water Program is in close contact with the Brunswick Topsham Water District. At this time, the discharge of firefighting foam containing PFAS at Brunswick Landing is not impacting the Brunswick Topsham Water District (BTWD) water supply. Homes and businesses served by the BTWD can safely use the water. As a precautionary measure, the BTWD discontinued use of the wellfield in close proximity to Brunswick Landing in order to prevent the PFAS from potentially impacting the drinking water supply. That wellfield will not be put back into use until testing shows that PFAS in the drinking water is within allowed regulatory limits. The BTWD is currently using unimpacted drinking water sources that are sufficiently distant from the foam discharge at Brunswick Landing. The Maine CDCs Drinking Water Program (DWP) is working with the BTWD as they monitor the situation through increased water quality sampling and is also working in close collaboration with State and Federal response and regulatory partners.

The Maine CDC recommends the public avoid contact with foam they may encounter in waterways on the former Brunswick Naval Air Station. Maine CDC also advises the public not to take fish from any waters located on the former Brunswick Naval Air Station (including Picnic Pond, Merriconeag Stream, and Mere Brook east of the runway) while officials evaluate the potential impact to the watershed.

For additional information, contact: David R. Madore, Deputy Commissioner david.madore@maine.gov

https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.maine.gov%2fdep%2fnews%2fnews.html%3fid%3d12955895&c=E,1,GUw3STm69iRzTph5cuOf3bJDr8vgZfSYO_aOcQZpCF_puGE8cgEv4qhkS5zv0M19Weow0NErmM1EaNXkFKnK8YAYjxF75FKT5pmt0oWBcYwCtigbh1C6wD0,&typo=1