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Petroleum contamination reported in Navy's Aiea Halawa shaft

HONOLULU – Diesel fuel levels more than double the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) limits for drinking water were reported by the Navy today in water samples collected at the Navy's Aiea Halawa Shaft. The shaft is one of three ground water sources that provides drinking water to the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) water system.

The Navy reported that the sample was drawn on Sunday, December 5. The Navy's Aiea Halawa Shaft and the Honolulu Board of Water Supply's Halawa Shaft are different water systems. The Board of Water Supply's Halawa Shaft is located approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the Navy's Aiea Halawa shaft. The Navy reported to DOH that its Aiea Halawa shaft has been offline since Friday, December 3.

"The level of this contaminant poses a public health threat, and is considered unsafe to drink," said Kathleen Ho, Deputy Director for Environmental Health. "This news is concerning—especially as the cause of the petroleum release into the Navy's water system remains unknown. We will continue to take all possible action to protect public health and the environment."

A level of 920 parts per billion (ppb) of total petroleum hydrocarbons diesel range organics (TPH-d) was reported by the Navy. The DOH Environmental Action Level (EAL) for TPH-d is 400 ppb. An EAL is a risk-based level below which no human health effects are expected. DOH staff will collect samples from the Aiea Halawa shaft Thursday.

DOH recommends all Navy water system users should avoid using the water for drinking, cooking, or oral hygiene. This includes consumption by pets. Navy water system users who detect a fuel-like odor from their water should also avoid using the water for bathing, dishwashing or laundry. This recommendation applies to users of the Navy's Joint Base Pearl

Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) water system, including the Aliamanu Military Reservation, Red Hill and Nimitz Elementary Schools and military housing.

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