



**DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR**

**Hawai'i Department of Health orders Navy to suspend operations,  
empty Red Hill underground storage tanks & treat contaminated  
drinking water**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) is issuing an order to the United States Navy to suspend operations at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, take measures to treat contaminated drinking water at the Red Hill shaft and safely remove fuel from the 20 underground storage tanks at Red Hill.

"I appreciate the Navy's announcement that it has temporarily suspended its fuel operations at Red Hill. Hawaii's wellbeing and the safety of our residents, including military families, must come first. We cannot have national security without ensuring public health and safety. There are still really important questions that need to be answered and the Order being issued by the Department of Health will help all parties get there. We are actively engaged in getting to the bottom of the issue as quickly as possible and as safely as possible," said Gov. David Y. Ige.

"The Department of Health is taking action to fulfill our mission of protecting human health and the environment," said Health Director Dr. Elizabeth Char, FACEP. "The Navy's contamination of drinking water has impacted all O'ahu

residents—military and civilian—and we must take appropriate steps to safeguard the drinking water we all share as a community.”

The Navy is ordered to:

- Immediately suspend operations at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Tanks, including fuel transfers. The Navy must continue to maintain environmental and monitoring controls.
- Take immediate steps to install drinking water treatment system(s) at Red Hill Shaft to ensure distribution of drinking water conforms to the standards prescribed by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and applicable federal and state regulations. This action should also minimize movement of the contaminant plume(s).
- Submit a workplan and implementation schedule within 30 days, prepared by a qualified independent third party approved by DOH, to assess the operations and system integrity to safely defuel the Bulk Fuel Storage Tanks. Upon DOH’s approval of the assessment, workplan and implementation schedule, the Navy must make necessary corrective actions to address any deficiencies as expeditiously as possible.
- Within 30 days of completion of required corrective actions, remove fuel from the Bulk Fuel Storage Tanks at the Red Hill facility.
- Within 30 days of receipt of this EO submit a workplan and implementation schedule, prepared by a qualified independent third party approved by DOH, to assess operations and system integrity of the Red Hill facility to determine design and operational deficiencies that may impact the environment and develop recommendations for corrective action. Upon the Department’s approval, the Navy must perform work and implement corrective actions as expeditiously as possible.

[Click here to read the full Emergency Order](#). The State is in the process of serving the Navy with the order and the Navy can request a hearing on the order within 24 hours of service.

The DOH appreciates the Navy’s voluntary suspension of the underground storage tank operations at Red Hill. This emergency order ensures the suspension remains

in place until independent evaluators can ensure that appropriate actions are taken to protect drinking water.

On Sunday, November 28, DOH was notified that Navy water system users on O'ahu reported fuel-like odors in tap water. Further investigation revealed that drinking water tested positive for petroleum components and DOH has received more than 500 complaints to date. The Navy identified that a drinking water source at the Red Hill shaft was contaminated. The emergency order also identifies historical releases and other information that shows that the Red Hill underground storage tank system presents a threat to drinking water and human health.

Until there is adequate evidence to show that water is safe to drink, DOH recommends all Navy water system users should avoid using the water for drinking, cooking, or oral hygiene. 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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