



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH A. CHAR, MD
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2022

22-120

DOH conditionally approves first phase of Red Hill defueling

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) conditionally approved the U.S. Navy's unpacking plan to remove existing fuel from the three pipelines at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The Navy's Unpacking Plan is the first phase of its overall plan to defuel the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility, as required under DOH's May 6, 2022 Emergency Order.

"The Department of Health is focused on ensuring the Navy defuels Red Hill safely," said Deputy Director of Environmental Health Kathleen Ho. "DOH staff completed a careful review of the unpacking plan, observed spill response drills, and required additional environmental control measures be put into place before unpacking can begin. We continue to push for the defueling and closure of the Red Hill facility to happen as quickly as possible with safety as our first priority."

The Navy indicated that unpacking maneuvers will begin in the next couple of weeks. Removing existing fuel from the Red Hill pipelines will allow the Navy to begin critical repairs to facilitate safe defueling. These include repairs to prevent and minimize impacts from a pressure surge event similar to the one that occurred on May 6, 2021.

The Navy must seek DOH approval on a repair plan and defueling plan before those phases can move forward.

DOH is requiring the Navy to take the following additional steps to prevent or to respond to a spill:

- Completion of a site visit to inspect repairs and systems installed to divert and recover fuel in the event of a spill;
- Completion of personnel training to ensure full and consistent understanding of unpacking;
- Incorporation of DOH's comments into release response plan procedures;
- Protecting preferential pathways to the drinking water aquifer;

- Requiring the Navy to stage additional staff and equipment on site that can be used to divert or recover fuel.

[Click here to read DOH's conditional approval letter.](#)

[Click here to read the Navy's unpacking plan.](#)

#