Measuring Environmental Contaminants

The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) uses several different parameters to guide environmental assessment and remediation.

Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons

Testing for total petroleum hydrocarbons does **not** differentiate between hydrocarbons that are derived from **fuel** or **bacteria**. Health risk cannot be assessed based on TPH screening values alone. TPH is one of many tests that informs DOH's multiple lines of evidence approach, which considers more than 40 different compounds and screening parameters.

Incident Specific Parameter (ISP)

- Set by DOH for specific contamination events
- Calculated based on environmental and health risk with incident-specific factors
- For Red Hill, used to measure TPH detections in premise plumbing and the Navy drinking water system

Environmental Action Level (EAL)

- Set by DOH for several contaminants as a general screening number for environmental cleanup
- Used to rapidly screen and identify potential environmental hazards
- Was used for Red Hill emergency response until the ISP was calculated

Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL)

- Set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water, measured at the entry point to distribution
- There is no MCL for total petroleum hydrocarbons