



Media Notice for Immediate Release

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Federal Health Agency Confirms Fort Ord Drinking Water Was Safe During Army Era — And Remains Safe Today

***Updated science confirms 1985–1994 findings;
public comment period now open through August 22***

MARINA, CA (July 9, 2026) — A federal public health agency has concluded that drinking water in the former Fort Ord area posed no health risk from 1985 to 1994. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) reviewed historical water data from that period and found that, although some contaminants were detected, levels were below health concern thresholds for both cancer and noncancer health effects.

ATSDR used updated scientific methods and tools to re-examine drinking water sampling data from 1985–1994 provided by the U.S. Army and Marina Coast Water District (MCWD). The evaluation covered exposure through everyday household water use (drinking, showering, washing, and cooking) for both residents of the former Fort Ord area and soldiers-in-training stationed at the base. Although nine contaminants required additional evaluation, ATSDR concluded that none reached levels of health concern. The study covers 1985–1994, the period for which drinking water sampling data are available.

"We have always believed in the safety of the water we deliver, and this independent federal review — using the latest scientific tools — backs that up," said Remleh Scherzinger, General Manager of Marina Coast Water District. "We welcome this kind of review. Our ratepayers deserve to know their water is safe, and they deserve the confidence that comes from outside experts agreeing with us. It is also important for customers to know that our drinking water is drawn from different aquifers that are separate from and significantly deeper than the shallow groundwater that the Army is cleaning. The shallow groundwater has never been utilized as a drinking water source. If you have questions, we encourage you to read the report and call us directly at (831) 384-6131."

ATSDR first evaluated the Fort Ord site in 1996 and found no apparent public health hazard. In 2022, Congressman Jimmy Panetta, former Congresswoman Katie Porter, and a Fort Ord veteran petitioned ATSDR on behalf of veterans and their families who had been stationed at Fort Ord to revisit that evaluation using today's more advanced scientific methods. The updated analysis reached the same conclusion — and stated it more definitively: drinking water contaminants in the former Fort Ord area were not a past health hazard.

MCWD has operated the Fort Ord water and wastewater systems since acquiring them from the U.S. Army in 2001. Providing safe, reliable, high-quality water is the District's top priority. Today, water from MCWD wells consistently meets all safe drinking water standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California State Water Resources Control Board.

The District carefully tests water from the groundwater source all the way to the tap. Last year, over 700

tests were performed for more than 120 substances — all conducted by independent, state-certified laboratories, with results reported to and reviewed by the State. Advanced monitoring systems, backup power supplies, and stored water reserves help ensure reliable service at all times. Results are published annually in MCWD's Consumer Confidence Report, available at [Water Quality : Marina Coast Water District](#).

The U.S. Army continues active efforts to monitor and address its groundwater contamination within the former Fort Ord lands. Army groundwater monitoring wells in the area do not supply drinking water to MCWD customers.

Public comments on the ATSDR report are due by August 22, 2026. Submit comments by email to OCHHAPublicComment@cdc.gov or by mail to:

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Attn: Records Center
4770 Buford Highway NE, MS S106-5
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

The full report is available at [California | Public Assessment & Health Consultation | ATSDR](#). The ATSDR fact sheet summarizing the findings is available at www.mcwd.org.

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About Marina Coast Water District: Marina Coast Water District provides drinking water and wastewater services to more than 47,000 residents and businesses in the cities of Marina and Seaside, California State University Monterey Bay, and the Ord Community. The District has operated the former Fort Ord water and wastewater systems since 2001 and maintains water quality that meets all California and federal health standards. Learn more at www.mcwd.org.