



January 18, 2019

Holy Rosary Church Water Testing Notice

PFAS Discovered in Groundwater Near Dillingham Airport Firefighting Foam Discharge Areas

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) was recently alerted to concentrations of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) exceeding the state action level for drinking water in the Holy Rosary Church well near the Dillingham Airport. The Church well tested at 186 parts per trillion (ppt) for the sum of five PFAS compounds, which exceeds the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) action level of 70 ppt. Nine wells were sampled on or near airport property, the eight other wells that were tested ranged from not detected to 22 ppt.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) began initial sampling of private water wells near airport property in December. DOT&PF has contracted with third-party independent contractor, Shannon & Wilson, Inc. to continue the preliminary investigation, which includes an in-depth well search and sampling event.

PFAS are commonly used in products for fire suppression, resistance to wear, and repelling oil, stains, grease, and water. PFAS can be found in apparel, some consumer products, and firefighting aqueous film forming foams (AFFF). The use of AFFF during firefighting equipment testing at the Dillingham Airport is the presumed source of PFAS contamination in the affected wells. PFAS are considered emerging contaminants and the health effects are not yet well characterized.

The Holy Rosary Church has discontinued public access to their water well. Community members who utilized the Holy Rosary Church as a drinking water source may visit the Dillingham Senior Center, water is available on the north side of the building, between the hours of 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. to refill their jugs until an alternative permanent water solution has been established. For those who have water from the Church well at their homes, we advise that residents no longer use it for drinking and cooking. However, cleaning, showering, and laundry are acceptable based on current research.

To learn more about PFAS, visit the following websites:

- Department of Health and Social Services- Environmental Public Health Program: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/eph/Pages/PFAS.aspx>
- Department of Environmental Conservation: <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/pfas-contaminants/>
- Department of Transportation & Public Facilities: <http://dot.alaska.gov/airportwater/>

For questions:

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