

Ford, Travis M. - Fire

From: Steers, Jeffery (DEQ) <Jeffery.Steers@deq.virginia.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:03 PM
To: Ford, Travis M. - Fire
Cc: Rolband, Michael (DEQ)
Subject: RE: Richmond Fire and Emergency Services

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Dear Chief Ford: Thank you for your inquiry regarding use of foam at the City of Richmond Fire Training facility. As I mentioned to Chief Carter, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Henrico County are currently conducting an investigation of the release of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) substances into the environment in and around the Richmond International Airport (RIA). During the Fall of 2021, DEQ was notified of documented PFAS compounds in the Middle Chickahominy watershed by the Newport News Water Works (NNWW). A unified command was stood up to address potential threats to human health and the environment. DEQ, VDH and Henrico County are members of the UC.

While the UC has conducted environmental and drinking water testing in the area, DEQ has begun an investigation into the source. The main constituent found in the releases are two of the most common types of PFAS found in Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF): perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and/or perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Impacts appear to be coming from in and around RIA. Further study and a review of historic documentation indicates that impacts to area groundwater may be due in part to past operations of the former Air National Guard base that operated on the airport property. Other possible sources include an active Army National Guard facility and past airport operations.

The City of Richmond Fire Training facility also operates at RIA. While we have no evidence of ongoing releases from the training facility, we did include its operations as a potential source. On February 7, 2022, DEQ held a kickoff meeting with all of the potential responsible parties to discuss historic uses and releases of PFAS compounds. Representatives of Richmond Fire included Brian Turnage, Fire Battalion Chief and Christopher Cozzie, Fire Captain. At that meeting, Richmond Fire indicated that these type of foams had not been used for training exercises at the airport and that they would confirm that this policy has and continues to be in effect at the facility. On February 28, 2022, Battalion Chief Turnage confirmed to DEQ that no fire suppression foam is utilized on the fire training grounds and per policy of the department, members were and are currently aware of the mandate not to flow foam. Based on this information and data collected on other portions of airport property, we are not actively investigating the City of Richmond Fire Academy as a source of PFAS into the environment. DEQ however, reserves the right to conduct further study and investigation of the training facility should new information become available.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeffery A. Steers
Director of Regional Operations
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

From: Ford, Travis M. - Fire <Travis.Ford@rva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 7:55 AM