



# Town of Coupeville Drinking Water System Expansion to Homes Near Outlying Landing Field Coupeville, Washington



August 2022

The Navy and the Town of Coupeville are working under a cooperative agreement to support the construction of new drinking waterlines in designated areas near Outlying Landing Field (OLF) Coupeville. New waterlines are needed because in 2016, the Navy identified homes with drinking water wells containing perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and/or perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) above the 2016 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lifetime drinking water health advisories of 70 parts per trillion (ppt), individually or combined. These homes need to be connected to the Town of Coupeville’s water system to ensure they are provided drinking water long-term that is tested and treated for safety and quality standards. The Town of Coupeville and the Navy need cooperation from local residents to complete this critical waterline project. The Town must acquire utility easements, and the Navy needs temporary property access agreements to begin construction. This fact sheet provides background on the Navy’s drinking water investigation, a summary of what to expect before and during construction, including easement and access agreement requirements, and next steps.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Navy is addressing past releases of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS, under the Navy Environmental Restoration Program. These substances may be present in the soil and/or groundwater at Navy sites as a result of historical fire-fighting activities using aqueous film forming foam (AFFF). The Navy’s first step with PFAS investigations was to sample drinking water sources that are on and near installations with confirmed or likely past AFFF releases, as PFAS can move with the groundwater and potentially impact drinking water sources.

Beginning in 2016, the Navy conducted an off-base drinking water investigation near OLF Coupeville and has sampled 117 drinking water wells to date. PFOA and/or PFOS were found at concentrations above the 2016 EPA health advisory (70 ppt) in eight private drinking water wells that provide drinking water to a total of 11 homes (see *Figure 1*). The Navy immediately began providing bottled water for drinking and cooking as a short term solution. Further, the Navy identified connection to the Town of Coupeville drinking water system as a long term solution. The EPA expects to have regulatory levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for PFOA and PFOS in Fall 2023. Until the EPA establishes MCLs for PFOA and PFOS in drinking water, the Navy is using 70 ppt for PFOA and/or PFOS, individually or combined, to prioritize properties that should receive alternate water for drinking and cooking.

Additional information on these off-base drinking water investigations can be found on the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island PFAS website (<https://www.navfac.navy.mil/NASWIPFAS>).

Following the off-base drinking water sampling, the Navy started an on-base investigation of PFAS releases. The investigation confirmed the presence of PFAS in groundwater at OLF Coupeville, and the Navy determined that PFAS in groundwater had reached the Town of Coupeville’s drinking water system. The Navy has since worked with the Town of Coupeville to pay for and install equipment to treat PFAS at the Town of Coupeville’s plant.

## **TOWN OF COUPEVILLE DRINKING WATER SYSTEM EXPANSION**

The Navy is paying all costs to connect to the Town of Coupeville water system to the 11 homes near OLF Coupeville with drinking water affected by PFOA and/or PFOS. This includes water main expansion and service line installation. Water mains are the primary underground pipes in the Town’s water distribution system. Once construction is complete, the Town will own the water mains and the property owners who are connected to the water system will own the service line connections on their property. The Navy has completed the necessary water main and service line construction for seven of 11 affected homes, and therefore does not continue to provide bottled water for drinking and cooking to those homes.



*Figure 1 – Project Location*

Before construction can begin for the remaining four homes, utility easements and temporary access agreements are required. The Town of Coupeville must obtain utility easements with select property owners to widen the road, install the water main, hydrants, valves, sampling station, infiltration gallery, and a firetruck turnaround area. Figure 2 shows a simplified view of the road after construction. The easements are necessary for the Navy to construct the water main and associated features and for the Town to conduct necessary operation and maintenance of the water main in the future.



Figure 2 – Road Improvements

The Navy needs short-term access agreements on properties for construction that will occur outside of the Town’s easement area such as installing the service lines from the water main to the homes. These access agreements are only in place until construction is complete and will allow access for limited activities.

The construction may take up to three months and will include short-term road access restrictions that will be coordinated with the residents. In general, construction will include:

- Verifying location of existing utilities (i.e., gas, electric, etc.);
- Removing fences, trees, shrubbery, and other vegetation in the construction and easement area;
- Trenching and installing water lines, valves, and fire hydrants;
- Installing new infiltration gallery and sample station for the Town’s future operation and maintenance activities;
- Installing service lines, water meters, and backflow prevention valves for homes connected to the Town’s water service; and
- Conducting site restoration.

When connection to the Town’s water system is complete, those homes will no longer need to receive bottled water or a point-of-use filter, as applicable, from the Navy. Once affected residents are connected, the Navy will contact residents before stopping the bottled water service. Additionally, once an affected home is connected to the Town’s water supply, the residents will be responsible for paying for their water usage and annual backflow preventer inspections.

The Navy’s offer to connect an affected homes to the Town of Coupeville’s water system is optional. If residents choose not to connect the Town’s water, we request the decision in writing by sending an email to the Navy contact on this factsheet or filling out the acknowledgment form previously provided. If residents choose to decline the Navy’s offer, they may continue to receive bottled water or a point-of-use filter in the interim. At this time, the Navy cannot confirm we will be able to continue measures such as bottled water and point-of-use filters after the long-term remedy of connecting residents to the Town of Coupeville’s water system is complete.

**NEXT STEPS**

The Town of Coupeville will continue to engage with residents to obtain the necessary easements for construction and operation and maintenance of the new water main to extend service to the four remaining homes. The Navy will start to engage with residents where short-term access agreements are needed for installation of service lines and other limited activities. If all necessary easements and access agreements are obtained by December 2022, construction will begin in 2023.

Additionally, the Navy will continue to conduct on- and off-base PFAS investigations to better understand where and how far PFAS has migrated into the environment from OLF Coupeville, and to determine if any further actions should be taken to protect human health and the environment. Possible future actions include providing interim bottled water to newly identified affected well owners, connecting affected well owners to the Town’s water, and conducting on-base soil and/or groundwater removal/treatment in accordance with applicable regulations and coordination with our federal and state regulatory partners.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.navfac.navy.mil/NASWIPFAS>  
[https://www.secnav.navy.mil/eie/Pages/PFAS\\_Home.aspx](https://www.secnav.navy.mil/eie/Pages/PFAS_Home.aspx)

**Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Public Affairs Officer**  
 360-257-2962 | michael.t.welding.civ@us.navy.mil

**Town of Coupeville Mayor Molly Hughes**  
 360-678-4461 | mayor@townofcoupeville.org