

FACT SHEET
Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune, NC

NOTICE TO VA EXAMINERS
VBA Considers this Veteran Exposed to Contaminated Drinking Water

From the 1950s through the mid-1980s, persons residing or working at the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to drinking water contaminated with volatile organic compounds. Two of the eight water treatment facilities supplying water to the base were contaminated with either trichloroethylene (TCE) or tetrachloroethylene (perchloroethylene, or PCE) from an off-base dry cleaning facility. The Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry estimated that TCE and PCE drinking water levels exceeded current standards from 1957 to 1987 and represented a public health hazard. The heavily contaminated wells were shut down in February 1985, but it is estimated that over one million individuals, including civilians and children, may have been exposed.

There has been much public interest and media coverage of the potentially harmful health effects associated with the contaminated water supply at Camp Lejeune. The National Research Council of the National Academies of Science released a report in June 2009, which found that scientific evidence for any health problems from past water contamination is limited. The evidence for amounts, types, and locations of contamination were not well recorded at the time and cannot now be extrapolated. Therefore, conclusive proof of harmful health effects is unlikely to be resolved with any further studies.

This information is not meant to influence examiners rendering opinions concerning the etiology of any particular disability; but rather to ensure that such opinions are fully informed based on all known objective facts. Therefore, when rendering opinions requested by rating authorities for a disability potentially related to such exposure, please utilize this information objectively and together with the remaining evidence, including lay evidence, in the Veteran's record.

Adjudication Authority