

Facts About Former Fort Ord Groundwater Treatment

The Fort Ord water supply comes from wells that pump water stored under the surface of the ground. When rain falls on the land, much of the water – especially when there is sandy soil like that found in the Monterey Bay area – passes into the ground. The water continues to percolate through the soil until it hits an underground layer of clay or rock, and can go no further. When this happens, water accumulates in the ground and can be pumped from the ground. Geologists refer to water stored in the ground in this way as groundwater. The soil or rock where groundwater accumulates is called an aquifer.

The Monterey Bay area has been under water many times in geologic history. Each time the sea flooded the land, a layer of clay many feet thick covered the area. As the sea retreated, layers of sand and gravel were deposited by wind and rivers. As this cycle repeated itself, fresh water from rainfall accumulated to form the aquifers we depend on today for our water supply.



At the former Fort Ord, there are several aquifers. Each aquifer is separated from the others by a layer of clay, referred to as an aquitard.

The upper aquifer is called the A-aquifer. The other aquifers are named based on their depth below ground-level in the Salinas Valley.

The Fort Ord water supply comes from wells referred to as Well No. 29, Well No. 30, and Well No. 31. Each well taps into a water-bearing zone (aquifer) at a depth of about 300 to 400 feet called the Lower 180-foot aquifer. Wells No. 29 and No. 30 also tap into another water-bearing zone at a depth of about 400 to 500 feet called the 400-foot aquifer.

Groundwater Contamination Chemicals of concern have leaked into the groundwater at four known sites on the former Fort Ord. With one exception discussed below, these contamination sites are far away from the Fort Ord supply wells and do not threaten water quality.

The Army has built water treatment facilities to cleanup contaminated groundwater in three of the four sites, and this treatment is steadily reducing the contamination. The Army will treat the water until the concentrations of contaminants are low enough to meet safe drinking water standards. In one site discovered more recently, the Army is in the process of planning for a new treatment system.

The four contamination sites (see map below) are:

- A former fire-fighting training area near the former Fritzsche Army Airfield, now called Marina Municipal Airport (Operable Unit 1),
- A landfill south of the corner of Imjin and Abrams Roads (Operable Unit 2);
- A former truck and auto maintenance facility just east of Highway 1 (Sites 2 and 12), and
- A plume north of the corner of Imjin and Abrams Roads (Operable Unit Carbon Tetrachloride Plume).

