

Update 2: Unified Command continues response to AFFF spill in Brunswick

August 26, 2024

A Unified Command continues to respond to the release of 1,450 gallons of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) at the Brunswick Executive Airport.

Clean Harbors and Republic Services were contracted to actively respond to the spill with Maine DEP oversight. Contracted crews are working to contain and remediate the affected areas.

The impacted hangar has been cleaned and all discharged foam from the hangar has been removed. The impacted planes were cleaned and removed from the hangar. The planes will undergo another round of cleaning inside the hangar. At the conclusion of cleaning the planes, the hangar will be cleaned for a final time. Contracted crews will collect the rinse water. The affected TechPlace industrial spaces will also be steam cleaned by contracted response crews.

Additionally, four vacuum trucks have been deployed to the four impacted surface water retention ponds to conduct foam removal. All collected PFAS-impacted water from response activities will be transported out of state.

Surface water samples have been taken at the retention ponds and at Harpswell Cove by DEP employees, the results of these samples will be used to guide immediate remediation actions and to continue to monitor any further potential impacts.

The Department has received the final laboratory report for the four samples collected from the site on Monday, August 19. These initial samples were taken to provide a baseline for comparison to best inform site response progress. Results show that PFOS is the primary compound detected in the samples. PFOS and PFOA are part of a subset of PFASs known as perfluorinated alkyl acids (PFAAs). PFOS was detected in the AFFF product sample from the storage tank at 3,230 parts per million (ppm) and in the mixed product sample (AFFF + water) at 7.52 ppm. The sample from the inlet of the surface water pond showed PFOS at 1.04 ppm, and the sample from the outlet of the surface water pond showed PFOS at 0.000701 ppm. A copy of the lab results are available on [DEP's website](#).

The public drinking water supply to Brunswick Landing comes from the Brunswick- Topsham Water District (BTWD) and has been confirmed safe to drink. The public water supply has not been impacted by this incident. Homes and businesses served by the BTWD can safely use the water.

On Friday, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) issued new [freshwater fish consumption advisories](#) recommending either no consumption or limited consumption of fish from four waterbodies located on and around the former naval air station. These advisories were based on earlier testing that revealed levels of PFAS in the fish. The accidental release of AFFF had no impact on those advisories as the "do not eat" advisory was to be issued based on PFAS levels detected prior to this most recent release of foam.

Out of an abundance of caution, the Maine CDC also recommends the public refrain from any recreational activities (e.g., swimming, boating, wading) that could result in contact with the foam or waters until the potential impact of the AFFF release on these waterbodies is fully assessed.

The Unified Command is utilizing the drone program from the University of Maine, Augusta to conduct daily aerial surveillance of the surface water pathway to identify foam locations and inform removal actions.

The AFFF continues to foam in the retention ponds, and it is unclear for how long the foam will be present. Weather and rain may increase the production of foam due to the agitation of the water. The Unified Command is working with partner agencies to determine best practices for foam mitigation.

DEP will have staff on site overseeing removal activities until no further removal activities are needed and the site can be returned to its previous status for long-term remediation under Superfund.

The public should avoid contact with foam. If any foam is observed outside of restricted areas, residents in the spill site area should report it by calling: 207-844-8040. This number is to report AFFF foam only.

There have been no reports of impacts to wildlife.

A Unified Command was established to response to the release of AFFF.

The Unified Command is comprised of:

- Maine Department of Environmental Protection
- Maine Department of Health and Human Services' Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Town of Brunswick
- U.S. Coast Guard

The Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority is posting updates twice a day on their website. Previous press releases about the response can be found on the [DEP News webpage](#). The next update is scheduled for Wednesday, August 28, 2024, unless new information or additional test results become available before then.

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