



### About per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)

Defence is conducting a national program to review its estate and investigate and implement a comprehensive approach to manage the impacts of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) resulting from the legacy use of fire fighting foams. PFAS contained in these foams included perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). These old foams were once used extensively worldwide and in Australia due to their effectiveness in fighting liquid fuel fires.

Most people living in developed nations will have some level of PFOS and PFOA in their body as these chemicals were used in common household and industrial applications, such as in the manufacture of non-stick cookware, fabric, furniture and carpet stain protection applications, food packaging and in some industrial processes.

PFOS and PFOA are emerging as compounds of interest around the world because they are persistent in the environment. From 2004, Defence started phasing out its use of old foams. The product currently used by Defence is a more environmentally safe product.

### About PFAS blood testing

The Australian Government has committed to funding a voluntary blood testing program for residents of Williamstown and Oakey. Defence is working with the Commonwealth Department of Health and other relevant agencies to finalise the arrangements for implementing this program, with a view to such a program commencing as soon as possible. This coordinated program for voluntary blood testing will ensure that tests are collected in accordance with best practice quality assurance processes for PFAS, and will enable the results to improve Australia's scientific understanding of any potential health effects of PFAS.

In the interim, the Department of Defence has established arrangements to reimburse individuals who live or work, or have lived or worked, in the Williamstown and Oakey investigation areas who have already obtained blood tests. Defence will also meet the costs of PFAS blood testing for individuals who meet the same criteria in the Williamstown and Oakey environmental investigation areas who wish to obtain a PFAS blood test prior to the Australian Government-funded voluntary blood testing program commencing.

### What will a PFAS blood test tell me?

The Australian Environmental Health Standing Committee (enHealth) advises that:

*"A blood test can measure the level of PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS in a person's blood and can tell a person concerned about exposure to PFASs how their blood PFOS, PFOA and PFHxS levels compare with the levels seen in the general Australian population. However, these tests are not routine and there is at present insufficient evidence for a medical practitioner to be able to tell a person whether their blood level will make them sick now or later in life, or if any current health problems are related to the PFAS levels found in their blood."*

*As such, blood tests have no diagnostic or prognostic value and are not recommended for the purpose of determining whether an individual's medical condition is attributable to exposure to PFOS, PFOA or PFHxS."*

### Who is eligible for blood testing?

Individuals who live or work, or have lived or worked, in the environmental investigation areas around RAAF Base Williamstown and the Army Aviation Centre Oakey are eligible for blood testing.

### Will I have to pay for the blood test?

No. Defence will meet the cost of your PFAS blood test, and if applicable, a pre- and post-blood test consultation with a registered medical practitioner (where those costs are not otherwise covered by Medicare or another Australian-Government-funded program).

### When will these interim arrangements commence?

You can send your request for payment to Defence now. These interim arrangements will be in place until the Australian Government-funded voluntary blood testing program commences.

Individuals seeking blood tests should speak to their registered medical practitioner to discuss options for seeking a blood test.

### How do I claim payment for expenses associated with a blood test?

Individuals seeking reimbursement or payment of an unpaid invoice must send Defence a completed 'Reimbursement of PFAS Blood Test' form and any other necessary supporting documentation, to enable Defence to facilitate payments. All forms are available in the 'Support – Blood Testing' section of the following websites:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/Williamstown/Support.asp>

<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/Oakey/Support.asp>

Completed forms, with scanned documents, should be sent to:

**Email:** [PFC.Coordination@defence.gov.au](mailto:PFC.Coordination@defence.gov.au)

**Mail:** PFC Coordination, PO Box 7923, CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

### Where can I get more information?

Enquiries regarding these arrangements can be directed to:

#### For Williamstown:

Community Hotline Number: 1800 011 443

Email: [Williamstown.defence@aecom.com](mailto:Williamstown.defence@aecom.com)

Web: <http://www.defence.gov.au/id/Williamstown/Default.asp>

#### For Oakey

Community Hotline Number: 1800 136 129

Email: [defence.oakey.anz@aecom.com](mailto:defence.oakey.anz@aecom.com)

Web: <http://www.defence.gov.au/id/Oakey/Investigation.asp>

**Media enquiries:** should be directed to Defence Media Operations on (02) 6127 1999 or [media@defence.gov.au](mailto:media@defence.gov.au)  
Defence's media responses to journalists can be found at:  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/id/PFOSPFOA/Media.asp>

### Advice from the Department of Health:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-pfas.htm>



