

FS No. 027-0424

## Healthcare Provider Recommendations to Support Patients Exposed to the November 2021 Fuel Release at Red Hill (Updated 20 March 2024)

### BACKGROUND

On 20 November 2021, a jet propellant (JP-5) fuel release occurred at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. JP-5, including JP-5 fuel additives, entered the Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) water distribution system serving an estimated 93,000 individuals through residence, work, school, and/or day care.<sup>1</sup> The Interagency Drinking Water System Team, including Department of Defense, Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), and Environmental Protection Agency, was established to develop a system-wide recovery plan that included flushing and water testing. The DOH lifted the water advisory for the last zone in the JBPHH water distribution system on 18 March 2022.

Individuals served by the JBPHH water distribution system reported acute symptoms consistent with exposure to petroleum products, e.g., rash, nausea, vomiting, headache, eye irritation, and cough.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the specific level of exposure in any individual cannot be ascertained.

Some patients have continued to report persistent heterogeneous symptoms, which may not be well explained. The long-term health risks of exposure to JP-5 and fuel additives are unknown. Defense Health Agency Public Health is investigating the cause of persistent symptoms and reports of neurologic conditions and is planning an independent, third-party Red Hill exposure registry to monitor individuals' health and quality of life.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are recommendations to support patients with ongoing symptoms that they attribute to the fuel release:

- Since the long-term effects of exposure are currently unknown and under investigation, thoroughly evaluate patients exposed to the fuel release. Consider the possibility of novel or atypical presentations or associations regardless of the patient's age.
- Partner with patients to decide a shared diagnostic and treatment plan. Listen to their concerns and what matters to them.
- Report any unusual clusters, observations, or insights to Defense Health Agency Public Health at [dha.redhill@health.mil](mailto:dha.redhill@health.mil). Do not include any protected health information, but do leave your contact information. A staff member will follow up with you within 1 business day.

Your clinical expertise and support of patients exposed to the Red Hill fuel release are appreciated.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ATSDR) resources on JP-5 and other other jet fuel toxicology are at: (<https://www.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxProfiles/ToxProfiles.aspx?id=773&tid=150>).

<sup>2</sup> Clinical presentations experienced during the Red Hill fuel release are summarized in a CDC/ATSDR community survey, published in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7121a4.htm>).

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