



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Galveston District

News Release

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Corps of Engineers water tests show clean bill of health

Tests on water in the Galveston District Army Corps of Engineers headquarters facility have shown the water to be free of the legionella bacteria, the bacteria that cause Legionnaires' Disease. The water analysis, which was conducted by Environmental Diagnostics Laboratory, Clearwater, Fla., on Feb. 4, tested the water at 20 sites throughout the facility. All test sites came back with a "below detection limit" finding, meaning that no traces of the bacteria were found. Officials with the Texas Department of State Health Services have confirmed that it is safe to resume normal water activities. Follow-up monitoring will also take place to ensure the safety of the water.

"This is great news for our work force," said Colonel David C. Weston, Galveston District commander. "We followed a very strict procedure to ensure that all traces of the legionella bacteria no longer existed in our domestic water system, and we will continue follow up testing in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety Administration protocols and guidelines. We are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for our employees, all of whom contribute immeasurably to the success and well being of the Houston-Galveston area."

During the treatment phase, conducted Jan 29-Feb. 2, a strong chlorine solution was pumped into the building's water pipes to contact the legionella bacteria and kill the disease-carrying microorganisms. The chlorine solution remained in the pipes for 48 hours to ensure that pipe, valve, strainer, shower head and faucet surfaces were thoroughly treated. After the 48 hour contact period, the entire domestic water system was flushed with fresh water until a slight residual amount of chlorine remained in the system. Water samples were then taken after flushing had occurred, and the samples were sent to the laboratory for testing.

Follow-up testing will continue for the next six months in accordance with OSHA guidelines, and will include weekly testing for the first month after resuming safe water operations; every two weeks for the subsequent two months; and monthly for the three months after that. Plans are also underway for air quality testing since Legionnaires Disease is caused by airborne bacteria. Corps officials will keep its employees informed of the schedule and activities.

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