

LET'S TALK ABOUT CAMP LEJEUNE

MILLIONS EXPOSED TO TOXIC DRINKING WATER



KRAUSE & KINSMAN LLP



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Did you reside or work at Camp Lejeune between 1953 and 1987? If the answer is “yes” and you have suffered from a serious illness or medical condition, you may be entitled to compensation through the Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Lawsuit. We want you to understand what has happened, what is going on now, and what you need to do.

If you were exposed to toxic drinking water at Camp Lejeune like millions of others, you may be entitled to compensation for your injuries. You could receive damages for your loss in a personal injury claim or a wrongful death lawsuit.

The drinking water at Camp Lejeune was extremely toxic due to significant contamination by volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These chemicals have been tied to several medical conditions. As a result, numerous claims have been filed and legislation has been presented to compensate those victims for their suffering.




WHAT HAPPENED WITH CAMP LEJEUNE?

Camp Lejeune was contaminated with more than 70 chemicals which have been proven to be hazardous to humans. Many of them tested at more than 240 times what is allowed by safety standards. The main chemicals found are:

- Benzene: a toxic chemical that is used in manufacturing some plastics and resins
- Trichloroethylene (TCE): a solvent that is often used to clean metals
- Tetrachloroethylene (PCE): a chemical used in dry cleaning
- Vinyl chloride: VC is a byproduct of TCE and PCE when these chemicals breakdown

Most of the Camp was found to be contaminated by one of three affected water sources. This includes residential housing as well as the barracks for those service members who were single. Schools and administrative offices were also located in the contaminated area.



Some hazardous chemicals were found to be at levels 240 to 3400 times what is allowed by regulations.


Benzene contaminated the water from 800,000 gallons of fuel that leaked into the water supply from the nearby fuel farm on the base. Over 850 former residents from the camp have since filed claims totaling nearly \$4 billion. Today, there are more than 135,000 names on the registry to be notified for exposure to these toxins.

WHAT CAUSED THE CONTAMINATION?

The contamination occurred through three water treatment plants on base: Hadnot Point, Tarawa Terrace, and Holcomb Boulevard.

These plants were three of eight serving Camp Lejeune. Several factors contributed to the contamination.

- ABC Dry Cleaners, an off-base dry cleaner that dumped toxic chemicals

- 
- Industrial spills of various chemicals that made it into the water supply
 - Waste disposal sites around the base
 - Leaking underground storage tanks, including fuel storage

The Marine Corps was warned of the problem by various consultants and agencies. They failed to resolve the issue until shutting down the water treatment plants in 1985. They also failed to notify either current or former residents on the base about their toxic exposure.

The base began testing the water in 1980 to follow regulations set in place by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Early reports indicated that a high level of contaminants was found in the water.


However, no changes were made and the same water was used in drinking and bathing. Even when the wells were later closed, it was determined that proper notification wasn't given to those affected.



EVIDENCE SUPPORTING TOXIC EXPOSURE CLAIMS

Several investigations have taken place over the years about the toxicity of the water at Camp Lejeune, among other military bases. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) wasn't the first to study the water or release reports on the toxic chemicals found, but the agency has provided some of the most in-depth information.

In 1990, ATSDR released a report showing that PCE was the main toxin present in the Tarawa Terrace water system. It was in 1997 that ATSDR released the final version of its Public Health Assessment on Camp Lejeune. In this report, it listed three main hazards to the public drinking water. Pesticides had been found in the soil on base, VOCs were detected in the drinking water, and lead was discovered in the tap water.



A year later, in 1998, ATSDR conducted a study on the health of children who had been born between 1968 and 1985 and had been exposed to contaminants before birth.

In 2004, ATSDR reconstructed data from the two main contaminated water plants, Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point, to determine VOC contamination.

A lawsuit was filed in 2010 where the VA ruled that a former military member received 100 percent disability benefits for their cancer. Just two years later, another servicemember received benefits, also for cancer caused by exposure to toxic chemicals. These were the first two cases where the plaintiffs were awarded benefits and the government admitted fault for the situation at Camp Lejeune.

Since these first two cases, other claims have been filed, but many have been dismissed due to the time that has passed.



WHY LEGISLATION WAS NECESSARY

Because of how long it took for the government to acknowledge its failure to resolve the water contamination issue at Camp Lejeune, many victims could not seek justice due to a state law in North Carolina known as the statute of repose. The majority of claims filed have been denied. The legislation was introduced to help those affected seek justice and compensation for their injuries and losses.

HONORING OUR PACT ACT

Titled Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021, Honoring Our PACT Act of 2021 is a law that allows veterans to receive medical treatment if they had been exposed to toxins. They are eligible for care if they served at specific locations or participated in an activity that had high exposure risks.



THE BILL

The Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 opens a two-year window allowing those exposed to the toxic chemicals at Camp Lejeune who suffered from a severe illness to file a claim. The families of those who have died from exposure can also file a wrongful death lawsuit. This Act opens a whole new pathway for veterans, their families, and civilians to seek compensation for damages due to toxic water.