

RELEASE NO. 86-07-x

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PRIVATE WELLS

GEORGE AIR FORCE BASE, Calif.--Two private wells east of George Air Force Base were tested by the Air Force for the presence of chemical contamination. The base offered to test the wells when it appeared that the trichloroethylene (TCE) contamination in the groundwater beneath the base may extend off base.

One chemical compound, 1,2-dichloroethane, also known as ethylene dichloride, was found at concentrations above state action levels in one private well. The concentration was four parts per billion. The state action level is one part per billion. State action levels are based on one additional cancer case per million people over a 70-year life time drinking two liters of contaminated water a day.

Five other chemical compounds were found in trace amounts, most well below 1 part per billion. One well had TCE at a level of .26 parts per billion, about 1/20th of the state action level. No TCE was detected in the other private well.

Ethylene dichloride is commonly used in degreasers and as a soil fumigant in agricultural operations. The source of the contamination is unknown at this time.

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Base officials have notified the owners of the private wells and appropriate regulatory agencies of the findings. With the permission of the owners, additional samples will be taken at the two private wells to confirm the results of the first samples.

Additional test wells will be placed near the eastern boundary of the base to determine whether any of the contaminants found in the two wells may have come from the base.

Meanwhile, the base will continue its search for the extent of the TCE contamination on the base, and on private property north of the base with the consent of the landowners.

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