

Last week's water advisory highlighted safety, readiness, relationships

By Curt Keester 16 August 2019



(right to left) Charles Betoney, CBKS Safety Manager, Todd Hooper, Assistant Fire Chief, and Paul Lilley, Industrial Hygienist, Army Public Health Center, continue to investigate during a follow-on inspection, Aug. 16.

Carlisle Barracks, Pa. (Aug. 16, 2019) – On the morning of Aug. 5, acting on the recommendation of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Army Garrison Carlisle Barracks issued a "Do Not Use" Order for its water. The order demonstrated the Garrison's focus on readiness, its people first mindset and its regard for the safety of the Soldiers, Civilians and families who live and work on Post.

Approximately 32 hours later, following their complete testing of the Carlisle Barracks' water supply, the Pennsylvania DEP issued a final water report on Aug. 6. Based on their results, DEP saw no reason to continue the "Do Not Use" Order.

"The advisory may be lifted," according to Lynne L. Scheetz, Environmental

Group Manager, DEP Southcentral Regional Office. The command group concurred with DEP's analysis, and the advisory was lifted at 3 p.m. The decision brought to a close an event that highlighted Carlisle Barracks readiness and ability to respond in a potential crisis.

The event began around midnight on Aug. 5, when a resident on Post called the Barracks' Fire Department to report a CO detector alarm in their residence. The department responded quickly and began accessing the situation in the house. During their inspection of the home, the department's equipment registered an abnormal reading suspected as coming from the Barracks' water supply.

With the safety of residents in mind, the department widened its investigation and began sampling at several locations around the installation. The department's equipment continued to register similar readings. Garrison personnel then contacted State and local authorities, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and activated the Carlisle Barracks Emergency Management Team.

"I have great confidence in our first responders' skill and abilities," said Lt. Col. Short, Carlisle Barracks Garrison Commander. "They did everything they should to take the proper precautions to safeguard our community."

DEP arrived on Post and pulled hundreds of samples from across the installation, far exceeding the annual testing. Based on DEP's recommendation, Short and Maj. Gen. John Kem, Army War College Commandant, then issued a "Do Not Use" order, closed all facilities and instructed non-essential personnel not to report until further notice.

Following the order, the Emergency Management Team began coordinating the delivery of Port-a-Johns, 400-gallon potable water tanks and bottled water for residents. Water supplies began arriving at Carlisle Barracks within two hours of the initial order, and the Post Commissary established a drinking water distribution site for all residents. The Army Heritage and Education Center, which is on a separate water source from the main installation, remained open and made restroom facilities available to residents.

The event highlighted the close working relationship Carlisle Barracks maintains with its housing partners and the surrounding community. Balfour Beatty Communities provided additional drinking water at the Delany Field Clubhouse. The Pennsylvania Army National Guard delivered 400 gallon "Water Buffalos" and opened its armory, located near Carlisle Barracks, for

residents to shower. Also, Dickinson College, a close partner of the Army War College, provided the use of its Kline Center for showers and lockers.

The order extended into Aug. 6, and water distribution continued until DEP completed its testing of the water at Carlisle Barracks. That afternoon they determined the water to be safe for all use and free of contaminants and the advisory was lifted.

"I want to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility," said Kem.

Carlisle Barracks is continuing to investigate what caused their Fire Department's equipment to register a reading on Aug. 5 and will provide updates to its residents as the investigation continues.