Updated: May 19, 2025

PFAS INVESTIGATION AT

SALEM WILLAMETTE VALLEY AIRPORT

1. **When did you know there may be PFAS in soil sampled from one area of Salem Willamette Valley Airport?**

   A developer of a new hanger site conducted testing for PFAS in soil in October 2024 (Area 2). The City was provided a copy of report in late October. The report indicated elevated levels of PFAS in one corner of the hanger lot at depths between 2 feet and 8 feet. No impact was found to the groundwater in the area, per their investigation.

   In February 2025, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) invited airports throughout the State to share information about historic use of PFAS-containing aqueous-film forming foam on airport properties. Along with all 520 US airports receiving Federal Aviation Administration Part 139 certification[1] pertaining to safety standards, Salem's airport was required to store, train with, and use PFAS-containing aqueous-file forming foam.

   In April 2025, the City responded to a voluntary survey questionnaire from DEQ's Cleanup Program requesting information about historical storage and use of aqueous- film forming foam for fire-fighting operations as required by Federal Aviation Administration for Part 139 Certification. This aqueous-film forming foam contains PFAS.

   Following the City's response to DEQ's request for information, we wanted to learn more about which other location PFAS may be located on airport property. We began working with experts to build an investigation in April 2025.

2. **Where will you focus the airport PFAS investigation?**

   This work may expand depending on what is discovered during the Phase I investigation. The initial investigation will focus on three locations:

   a) Area #2, where the proposed hanger development project has already conducted PFAS sampling to understand its impact to the continuation of the work at the site
   b) Area #1, Fire Station 6, where fire fighting foam was routinely used for training purposes; and
   c) Area #3, a plane crash site where fire fighting foam was used.

[1] FAA Part 139 certification is required for airports serving air carrier operations in aircraft with more than 9 seats.

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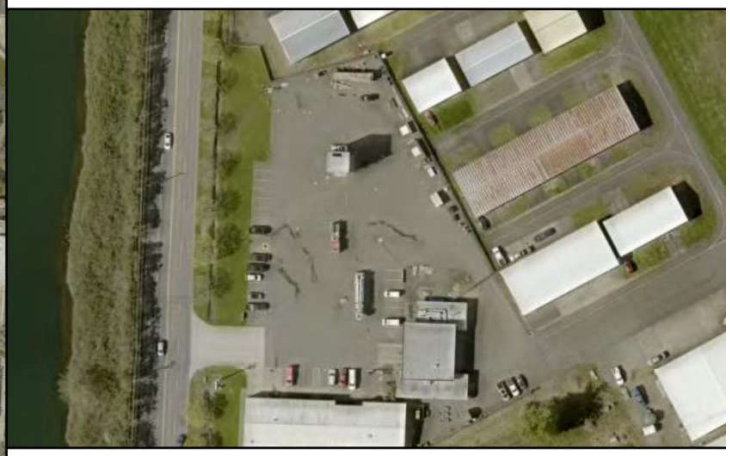
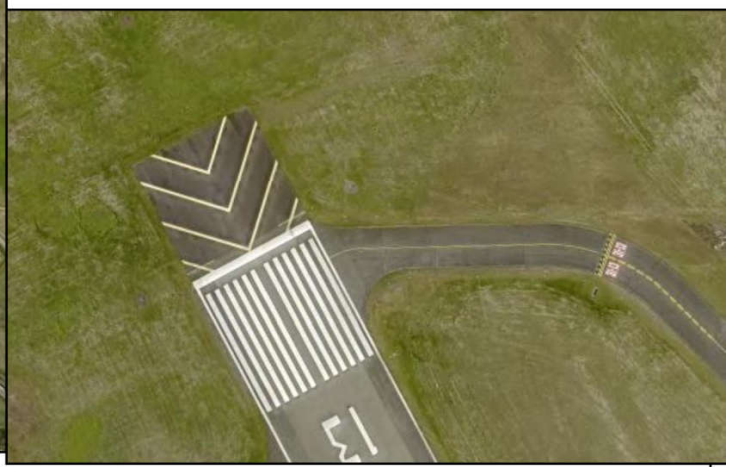
Area 1 - Fire Station and it's Vicinity



Area 2 - New Hangar Development Area

Area 3 - Historic Site of a Plane Crash



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Salem-Willamette Valley Airport

*Eagleview Imagery 2023

3. **When did the investigation start?**

   On April 10, knowing that the City needed to get better understanding of evolving situation related to PFAS impacts at the Airport, the City engaged APEX Companies for an initial investigation. APEX has vast experience in these type of investigations and is a preapproved consultant of record for the City .

   The purpose of their initial investigative work will be to identify areas historically used for fire training or use of retardant firefighting foams (also known as aqueous film forming foam) or other PFAS-containing substances.

4. **How long will the investigation take?**

   The initial work will take a couple of months. But depending on what is discovered, additional work may be required. Additional work on the airport property could include additional soil sampling and groundwater wells to define the impacted areas. This could take more than one year.

5. **How much will the investigation cost?**

   This initial stage of the investigation will cost $50,000. Depending on what we find, next steps may require mitigation to reduce risk of exposure to people and our environment.

6. **How is the City paying for this work?**

   The initial investigative work is being paid by the Public Works Utility fund to explore likelihood of impacts to stormwater conveyance and area waterways due to past practices or continued leaching.

7. **How are you testing soil and groundwater?**

   The plan is to use existing groundwater monitoring wells in the vicinity (if present), conduct push-probe sampling (if necessary). Push probe soil sampling involves using a T-shaped probe to collect shallow or surface soil samples. The probe is pushed into the ground, cutting a core sample smaller than the probe's diameter, which can then be retrieved for analysis. This method is commonly used for collecting soil samples for various purposes, such as assessing soil moisture, detecting rocks or debris, and understanding soil structure.

8. **Will any other sampling or testing take place?**

   In order to conduct an assessment of potential worker exposure to PFAS, the investigation may include collection of soil, water, aerosol, and wipe samples.

9. **What is the purpose of investigation?**

The purpose of the investigation is to:

a) understand if there is impact because of past use of firefighting foam or other PFAS at the Airport property and at Fire Station 6 (Area 1);
b) if contamination is found, determine the scope of the problem; and
c) determine what immediate and long-terms steps need to be taken for containment, mitigation, and remediation.

10. Will this discovery delay development at the Airport?

The City needs to conduct this initial investigation before we can determine whether development at other sites on the Airport property (Area 2) should be delayed.

11. When did the City stop using the firefighting foam at Salem-Willamette Valley Airport?

Use and storage of the fire fighting foam with PFAS was discontinued on September 27, 2024, when a waste disposal company collected all the material for proper disposal.

12. What have we provided to regulatory agencies to-date?

We have responded to the DEQ's voluntary questionnaire regarding storage, past use and any investigations that were conducted regarding PFAS.

13. **Where can I find more information?**

As we get more information, we will make it available to the community in multiple ways. You can find more information on the City's website located in the natural environment and climate section:

https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/natural-environment-climate/reports-references-and-resources/understanding-pfas

14. What is PFAS?

Awareness of PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) or "forever chemicals" is increasing throughout the United States.

PFAS are a group of manufactured chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s because of their useful properties. There are thousands of different PFAS compounds, some of which have been more widely used and studied than others.

Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS), for example, are two of the most widely used and studied chemicals in the PFAS group. PFOA and PFOS have been phased out of use in the United States and replaced with other compounds in recent years.

One common characteristic of concern of PFAS chemicals is that many are resistant to breaking down in the environment and, over time, can build up in plants, animals, and the environment.

While the science behind this emerging global issue is still being studied, Salem is taking early steps to share with the community testing data and the potential risks of PFAS in the City.

15. What other experience does the City have with PFAS?

In 2023, PFAS testing was performed on City wastewater and drinking water, and while the drinking water is free of PFAS, we continue to track and work with our permittees and DEQ on the issues related to PFAS in our wastewater no PFAS were found. Actions, results, resources, and additional details associated with the water testing were shared with the public at that time.

The information can be found on the website at www.cityofsalem.net/community/natural-environment-climate/reports-references-and-resources/understanding-pfas.

Information on ongoing drinking water testing is also posted here: www.cityofsalem.net/community/household/water-utilities/salem-s-drinking-water/unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule-round-5-ucmr5-results