

Subject: AVIATION FUEL CONTAMINATION RAAF BASE AMBERLEY
Comment:
Action Area DCOORD-AF

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HOT ISSUE BRIEF**

**ISSUE: AVIATION FUEL CONTAMINATION RAAF BASE
AMBERLEY**

SENSITIVITY: This incident has the potential to attract media interest, particularly if Heavy Lift operations are affected.

KEY ISSUES:

- A routine inspection has revealed an anomalous substance in the aviation fuel tanks at RAAF Base Amberley.
- As part of standard procedures, all jet aviation fuel on the base has been quarantined pending testing.
- The quarantine of fuel at RAAF Base Amberley will have minimal impact on planned aircraft operations.
- The matter may generate media attention if the nature of the quarantine is prolonged.

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BACKGROUND: FUEL CONTAMINATION AT RAAF BASE AMBERLEY

Earlier this month while conducting bottom water drains, a blue liquid was removed from one of the drain points located between the quarantine tanks – VST 5 and VST 6. The tanks either side of the common drain point were immediately quarantined and this fuel was prevented from entering the wider Amberley fuel farm.

Based on advice from Amberley fuel farm personnel, no contamination has been found in any other tanks or piping system within the fuel farm or piping itself. Therefore it is highly likely that the contamination has been contained within the quarantine tanks.

Subsequent analysis of the blue liquid found that the combination of chemicals indicates that there is contamination present in the aviation fuel. The impact of any contamination is unknown, so as a precautionary measure, all fuel within the fuel farm must be tested to ensure that it meets specifications and is fit-for-purpose.

Caltex and DSTO are currently testing the contaminated product to determine potential sources and supply issues. The testing may take up to seven days to be finalised, although a quicker turnaround is being pursued. Air Force is working with Caltex to investigate their supply chain and to ensure that there have been no unapproved additives used in the aviation fuel.

Aircraft based at Amberley can continue to operate through the activation of contingency plans.

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TALKING POINTS

Air Force can confirm that all aviation jet fuel has been quarantined at RAAF Base Amberley near Ipswich in Queensland.

The fuel has been quarantined while investigations determine the origin and impact, if any, on the finding of an anomalous substance found in the fuel system.

Quarantining the fuel is a precautionary measure that will enable all appropriate and necessary testing to be conducted to ensure that the fuel meets specification and is fit for purpose.

Planned aircraft operations at RAAF Base Amberley are not expected to be affected while the investigation takes place

and contingency plans will ensure that any emergency tasking will not be affected.

The aviation fuel is supplied by a commercial operator and the Air Force is working closely with the operator as a part of the investigation.

As the matter is now the subject of an investigation it would be inappropriate to comment further at this time.

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