



THE
FORT DETRICK
MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flooding to Fort Detrick Steam Sterilization Plant

(FORT DETRICK, Md.) — Fort Detrick officials today announced that its Steam Sterilization Plant (SSP) is undergoing repairs following recent flooding in the Frederick area.

The SSP provides steam sterilization of liquid waste from research laboratories at Fort Detrick. Workers initially discovered flooding rain water in the plant May 17. On May 25, a leaking storage tank was also discovered. Initial reports indicate that storage tanks were filled beyond capacity as a result of unprecedented rain in the region, causing a backup that eventually resulted in a leak outside the plant's concrete containment wall.

Wastewater from laboratories on post is chemically disinfected at the source, then routed to the SSP, where it is held in these storage tanks prior to entering the steam sterilization process.

Fort Detrick is taking the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of its employees and the surrounding community. All local, state and federal officials have been notified and will be provided with regular updates on the status of the SSP. Fort Detrick is continuing to work with regulatory agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Maryland Department of the Environment, to ensure compliance and determine the necessary next steps.

The U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), which uses the SSP to process chemically disinfected wastewater from its containment laboratories, is temporarily halting all Biosafety Level (BSL)-3 and BSL-4 operations until heat sterilization of liquid waste can resume.

Questions from the public may be directed to the Fort Detrick Public Affairs Office: (301) 619-2018

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