

# Camp Lejeune Vets are Seeking Damages for Exposure to Toxic Chemicals in Water Supply

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The first lawsuits against the Marine Corps base, Camp Lejeune, were filed in August due to evident exposure to toxic chemicals in the water supply. Under the latest [PACT Act](#), new protections have been passed for those military members affected by water contamination and other toxic exposures during military service at the North Carolina base.

The PACT Act now gives service members a basis to sue for health conditions caused by toxic exposures during service. The result has been several individual and class action lawsuits filed against Camp Lejeune.

Here's what this means for Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Lawsuit lawyers and their clients.

## What to Know About the Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Lawsuit

In February 1985, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease found high levels of toxic chemicals in the drinking water at the Marine Corps Camp Lejeune base. These chemicals have since been linked to cancer and many other serious health conditions in military members who attended the base.

### Over 70 toxic chemicals identified

Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) was the main contaminant found in the water supply, reaching a maximum level of 215 parts per billion (?g/L). [Other chemicals](#) found included trichloroethylene (TCE), vinyl chloride (VC), benzene, and as many as 70 other toxic substances.

### Several decades of possible contamination

The contaminated water at Camp Lejeune was often used for drinking, cleaning, and bathing. Investigators suspect that many Veterans, Reservists, and National Guard members who either worked or served at the camp between August 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987, might have been affected. This marks the worst and longest-running drinking water contamination case in US history.

### Toxic chemicals introduced by dry cleaning firm

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The source of contamination was identified as ABC One-Hour Cleaners, an off-base dry cleaning company. ABC was found to be illegally dumping hundreds of gallons of cancer-causing chemicals into the water supply over a 30-year period.

A worker from Lejeune later told investigators there was “no guideline, policy, or program in place for base personnel handling or disposing of any chemical until the mid-1980s.” Chemicals were dumped in the woods or poured directly into the ground. No evidence was found to support that this was to cause intentional harm, rather a matter of pure negligence.

### **Many Adverse Health Effects, including cancer**

While the most contaminated wells were shut down in early 1985, it is likely that contamination continued for many years later, resulting in many serious health issues. Most of those exposed during this time period developed one of the following diseases:

- Leukemia
- Aplastic anemia
- Bladder cancer
- Breast cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Lung cancer
- Esophageal cancer
- Tonsil cancer
- Tongue cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

In addition to cancer, the toxic contaminants have been associated with several other serious conditions, such as:

- Scleroderma
  - Parkinson's disease
  - Renal toxicity
  - Hepatic steatosis
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- Female infertility
  - Miscarriage
  - Birth defects

Studies conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have found that many of these conditions may have been caused by the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. Additional studies are ongoing to further investigate the link between the contaminants and veterans' health issues.

## **Camp Lejeune vets are suing for damages**

With many veterans, family members, workers, and contractors affected by the toxic chemicals at Camp Lejeune, the result has been many Camp Lejeune water contamination class action lawsuits. Members are understandably seeking financial relief to cover medical expenses and suffering caused by the contaminated water.

**And the victims aren't the only ones up in arms about these damages. Many attorneys have shared their perspectives on the contamination lawsuits:**

"Our veterans sacrifice so much for our country it is only fair that they receive just compensation for this egregious harm they have suffered through no fault of their own." – Randall Isenberg, Law Offices of Randall B. Isenberg

"Our veterans and their families sacrifice so much. The Camp Lejeune Water Contamination hit them with multiple types of cancer and infertility. They protected us and we will protect them." – Michael Beckman, Viles & Beckman

Many Camp Lejeune service members and residents have developed cancer and serious chronic conditions. The investigation has helped people seek justice, now knowing that their health conditions may have been caused by the water contamination rather than their own lifestyle choices.

## **Protections Provided by the Camp Lejeune Health Care Law**

In August 2022, President Joe Biden signed the PACT Act, which includes the [Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2021](#) which provides cost-free health care to veterans who served at least 30 days at Camp Lejeune between August 1953 and December 1987. This law also extends the deadline for filing claims against the base.

The bill is personal to Biden, who believes the brain cancer that killed his son was due to his exposure to toxic burn pits during military service. The act also applies protections to military service members who were exposed to burn pits and other toxic environments during service.

**The 15 qualifying health conditions under the Camp Lejeune Justice Act include:**

- Esophageal cancer
- Breast cancer

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- Kidney cancer
  - Multiple myeloma
  - Renal toxicity
  - Female infertility
  - Scleroderma
  - Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
  - Lung cancer
  - Bladder cancer
  - Leukemia
  - Myelodysplastic syndromes
  - Hepatic steatosis
  - Miscarriage
  - Neurobehavioral effects

## **Lawyers Share Their Thoughts on the Camp Lejeune Lawsuits**

If one thing is for sure, it's that the legal community is very attentive to this passionate case.

Whether representing the victims of the Camp Lejeune lawsuit or just being informed about the enormity of this case, many lawyers have shared their thoughts through our interviews.

“For decades service members and their families have been unable to get fairly compensated for the harm caused to them by the dangerously contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. The water contamination began in 1952 when Camp Lejeune was built and became progressively worse until 1987, which is when the Federal Government completely addressed the problem. Although the Camp Lejeune justice act of 2022 includes some strict eligibility requirements, it does finally provide a mechanism for those harmed to seek compensation.” – Doug Zanes, Zanes Law

“Our firm continues to fight for our servicemen and servicewomen as well as their families who served at Camp Lejeune many years ago and were diagnosed with a variety of conditions linked to the contaminated water at the base. What happened there is a travesty that will not be forgotten soon. We work to make an impact on persons injured there.” – Bill Bross, Heninger Garrison Davis

“There may not be a more important collection of lawsuits in our country right now than the assistance we are providing to victims of the Camp Lejeune Water Contamination and their families.” – Adam Smallow, Law Offices of Adam M. Smallow

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## Seeking Help for Those Affected by Camp Lejeune Water Contamination

Veterans and family members who were affected by and/or resided in Camp Lejeune during the eligible period may qualify for medical care and reimbursement of out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered health conditions. To enroll in VA health care, members can [apply online](#) or call 1-877-222-8387 for assistance.

If you resided at or served on active duty at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days between 1953 and 1987, you may be eligible for compensation as well. It is best to contact a Camp Lejeune water contamination lawsuit lawyer to discuss your options.

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