

Update on F35 - 5/2/2022

Health Impacts

Safe Skies Clean Water and other Madison community groups are continuing a postcard/flier campaign to educate people about the proposed bed-down of F35 fighter jets at Truax Airfield and their negative effect on the health and safety of Madison residents, especially children.

There are over 30 schools and pre-school programs within 1-2 miles of Truax Air Force Base, including Madison College and 3 high schools.

Noise

The noise of an F35A at take-off and above our houses is 110-115 decibels (dB). Damage to hearing occurs with noise of 115 dB for 30 seconds (impulse sound) and with noise of 70 to 80 dB for 8 or more hours/day (continuous sound).

Children are more vulnerable to noise because they have less control over their environments and are still developing their cognitive skills: how they think, explore and figure things out.

In fetuses, exposure to loud noise can cause low birth weights which increases their risk of chronic medical conditions. In infants and children, noise can cause delayed development of speech and cognition and have negative effects on attention, concentration, long term memory and reading and math comprehension.

Even minimal sensorineural hearing loss has been associated with poor school performance, social and emotional dysfunction.

Besides hearing loss, exposure to loud or prolonged noise can result in high blood pressure, ischemic heart disease and increased cortisol levels with stress response in adults.

Air Pollution

A squad of 18 F35A jets (along with 4 F16 jets) will put out 250 tons every year of toxic chemicals, carbon monoxide and ultrafine particles.

Air pollution has been linked to higher rates of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and respiratory diseases such as asthma. It has also been linked to neurodegenerative diseases such as dementia, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis.

PFAS and other Chemicals

Due to use of (polyfluoroalkyl substances) PFAS in firefighting at Truax AFB, all but two wells on the East Side of Madison are contaminated with PFAS. Well 15 has been closed due to high PFAS levels.

There has been no remediation by the National Guard or Air Force of PFAS soil and water contamination. As new runways are being built for the F35's, contaminated soil will be disturbed, further releasing PFAS into the groundwater.

High levels of PFAS are linked to kidney, testicular and prostate cancer, liver function abnormalities, decreased immune function, high cholesterol, thyroid disorders, pregnancy induced high blood pressure and smaller birth weights.

If F35A's are based at Truax, further contamination of our air, soil and groundwater may occur due to the reapplications of a "stealth" coating after each F35A flight.

Safety

Madison is a densely populated city. Each F35 jet carries nearly 19,000 lbs of fuel. There have been 2 reported crashes with the F35A jet, with one fatality in Japan. There have been 2 reported crashes with the F35B jet, with no fatalities. There have been 3 serious "mishaps" during F35A flights in the US, 2 of which involved engine fires.

The F35 is made of "composite" materials. If it were to catch fire or crash, the burning composites could release toxic gases and fibers that could pose a risk even after a fire is extinguished and not only to firefighters, recovery crews and police officers but to people in adjacent neighborhoods.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Complaint

Safe Skies Clean Water Wisconsin submitted an Environmental Justice Complaint to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) asking it to intervene in the Air Force decision to deploy a squadron of F-35A fighter jets to Truax.

Safe Skies contends that the Civil Rights Act has been violated by the Air Force, state, county and local leaders, because the greatest negative environmental impacts of the jets will fall on the low-income families and families of color that live near the Dane County Regional Airport and Truax Field.

What You Can Do

Ask your Dane County Supervisor to stop construction of new F35 runways and buildings until PFAS monitoring and cleanup at Truax is completed.

Contact Senators Baldwin and Johnson, Representative Pocan, Governor Tony Evers, your Dane County Supervisor and City of Madison Alder to tell them the basing of F35's at Truax will adversely affect your children's health.

Insist on PFAS monitoring and cleanup before any bed-down of the F35 jets.

Insist on research regarding noise levels within 2-3 miles of the F35's that are based in Burlington, Vermont.

Write your senators and President Biden in support of the EPA complaint. Low-income families and families of color will suffer most if the F35 is based at Truax.

<https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/contact-info-for-elected-officials-and-others/>

Post signs in your yard (\$5 each) and send postcards to your elected officials. See Safe Skies Clean Water website to order signs and cards. <https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/new-yard-signs-are-here/>