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## Whistleblower Disclosures Improve Jet Fuel Safety at Marine Corps Base

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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A Department of Navy installation failed to properly test aircraft refueling equipment and jet fuel, according to a Navy investigative [report](#) that the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) [sent](#) to the White House and Congress yesterday. OSC mandated the investigation based on the disclosures of Glenn Schwarz, a Marine Corps maintenance control coordinator at the Fleet Readiness Center East (FRC East) located on Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina. In addition, the investigation found that FRC East annually wasted 12,000 gallons of jet fuel because of its mistaken belief that the fuel was contaminated. FRC East services a variety of Navy and Marine Corps aircraft as well as aircraft from 31 foreign nations, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Army, and two other federal agencies.

The Navy's investigation found that, starting in December 2012, FRC East did not test fueling truck hoses and gauges at the intervals required by Navy regulations. The Navy investigation also found that FRC East did not perform any equipment maintenance inspections prior to June 2015. The investigation found that fuel hoses were in "extremely poor condition, and one was worn down to the metal." Some fuel hoses were not replaced or tested annually. Before December 2013, FRC East also failed to properly test jet fuel.

FRC East's failure to test these systems could have allowed contaminated fuel to cause an engine malfunction or failure during flight. FRC East's negligence also increased the risk that fuel pumped through deteriorating fuel hoses could spill and ignite, threatening the lives of personnel. The Navy stated that it found no records of mishaps based on the problems. However, the report noted a November 2013 incident when an aircraft received contaminated fuel. The fuel trucks in that incident had faulty valves and gasket seals that led to the contamination.

In a separate finding, the Navy confirmed FRC East discarded fuel that could have been used in aircraft not departing for sea duty, wasting about \$71,000 annually.

The Navy and FRC East have taken a wide variety of corrective actions.

"Mr. Schwarz's disclosures will save the Navy money and may also prevent a fatal tragedy involving our men and women in uniform," said Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner. "While the Navy is now taking these issues seriously, it is troubling that no employees were held accountable for allowing serious safety problems to persist, despite being aware of fuel testing improprieties for two years."

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*The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: the Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC's primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov).*