



Canada's Agent Orange Info Source

What You Need To Know

What is Agent Orange?

Agent Orange is a defoliant which was used by the U.S. Military during the Vietnam War. It is composed of equal parts of the chemicals 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. The by-product of this combination is TCDD or dioxin. It is a colourless substance, which was code-named after the orange stripes used on storage barrels.

In 1971, the U.S. Military ceased using Agent Orange following increasing evidence of the harmful effects of the substance for humans. Dioxin has been linked to a variety of illnesses, malignancies and disorders. Many health effects resulting from exposure are delayed.

Agent Orange in Canada?

Although Canada did not participate in the Vietnam War, the Canadian government has recently confirmed that Agent Orange was sprayed on the Canadian Forces Base in Gagetown, New Brunswick in 1966 and 1967. No other incidences of Agent Orange testing or use in Canada have been confirmed.

Was I exposed to Agent Orange?

There are no known tests which can verify whether or not a person was exposed to Agent Orange. While there are tests of dioxin in the blood, their reliability has been questioned. Canadian veterans posted to CFB Gagetown in 1966, members of their family who were present at the base and members of the Gagetown community in 1966 or 1967 may have been exposed to Agent Orange. Canadian Forces personnel posted to CFB Gagetown following 1967 and members of the community have potentially been exposed to Agent Orange, as it remains in the soil and has potentially contaminated the water table.

Canadian Forces service records are the only source which would indicate whether or not a veteran may have been exposed to Agent Orange. Concerned veterans are encouraged to contact the Department of Veterans Affairs, which has access to these records.



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What Should I Do?

If you have not already done so, contact your physician for a checkup. Identifying health problems early is important for receiving treatment. Make sure you discuss Agent Orange and its health effects with your doctor.

The Government of Canada has not offered any help or compensation to Canadians exposed to Agent Orange. The Department of Veterans Affairs has, however, agreed to provide disability pensions to Canadian veterans who can establish a medical case linked to Agent Orange.

If you are not a veteran, you may wish to write a letter to the Minister of National Defence and the Minister of Veterans Affairs urging that compensation be given to those who were exposed to Agent Orange.

How Do I Get A Disability Pension?

Applications can be made to Veterans Affairs Canada. You will need to include your name, contact information, a current medical diagnosis, medical reports and a statement outlining what you perceive to be the cause of your disability and how you relate it to military service. The Royal Canadian Legion and other veterans organizations frequently provide assistance in putting together applications and finding supporting documents. VAC can be reached at 1 866 522-2122 (English) or 1 866 522-2022 (French).

Can I Get a Pension If My Spouse Has Died?

Surviving spouses and some dependents are normally eligible for survivors benefits. Contact VAC to find out if you are eligible and how to apply.

How Do I Reach the Ministers?

Honourable Bill Graham
Minister of National Defence
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6
grahab@parl.gc.ca

Honourable Albina Guarnieri
Minister of Veterans Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6
guarna@parl.gc.ca



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Where To Find Information on the Web:

<http://www1.va.gov/agentorange/>

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs website has information on Agent Orange and its health effects, including detailed briefs on many of the health conditions that are associated with Agent Orange.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agent_Orange

and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dioxin>

Wikipedia offers a good introduction to Agent Orange and its byproduct dioxin in layman's terms. The articles also offer suggestions for further reading.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/speccoll/findaids/agentorange/text/00070.pdf>

US Defense Report on the Defoliation Tests in 1966 at Gagetown, outlining where and how herbicides were sprayed.

<http://www.diabetes.org/type-2-diabetes/agent-orange.jsp>

A fact sheet from the American Diabetes Association, concerning the association between dioxin and Type 2 Diabetes.

<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/>

[PED_1_3x_Agent_Orange_and_Cancer.asp?sitearea=PED](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_1_3x_Agent_Orange_and_Cancer.asp?sitearea=PED)

American Cancer Society article offering an introduction to cancer risks associated with Agent Orange in non-scientific language.

<http://www.blackwatchcanada.com/dcforum/DCForumID12/2.html#>

Forum for members of the Black Watch, which was posted in Gagetown in 1966.

http://users.skynet.be/terrorism/html/chemical_ao.htm

A bibliography of articles and books on Agent Orange.



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You Are Not Alone!

Although the Government of Canada has failed to provide resources to those exposed to Agent Orange, you are not alone! Canadian veterans' organizations have dedicated staff and resources who are willing to assist you and support you. They may be able to provide assistance in putting together the necessary documentation for your disability pension application. They may be able to put you into contact with others in your area who are in similar situations. They are accomplished advocates who are experienced in helping veterans and their families.

How to Contact Veterans Organizations:

Royal Canadian Legion

Assistance in putting together pension applications; providing contacts and resources. See accompanying sheet for your local command service officer.

National Council of Veterans Associations

Case workers can provide assistance for disability pension applications.

Call Faye Lavalley at 1-800-465-2677

The Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada

Support and resources for veterans. Call Dominion Headquarters at (613) 744-0222.