

Fort Sill transitions to heating season

The days and weeks of 100-plus degrees and high humidity are over, and the cooling temperatures again signal the time to transition from air conditioning to heating season.

As the annual cycle comes to a close, it marks the beginning of the equipment maintenance season in preparation for next year's air conditioning season.

Transition to heating

The initial stages of this year's heating season started earlier this year in May, when the heating systems were shut off. Since shut-down, preventive maintenance was performed and pre-inspections are coming to an end all to ensure a successful heating season.

System change over

The Directorate of Public Works has been monitoring the 15-day forecast. The evaluation process has concluded in a recommendation to proceed with seasonal changeover. The heating ventilation and air-conditioning, or HVAC, workforce will turn off air conditioning systems starting Oct. 24. The sequence will start with motor pools, warehouses, administration facilities, classrooms, dining facilities and finally, billets. HVAC technicians will turn on heating systems shortly thereafter in reverse sequence with priority given first to living quarters.

The goal is to have all systems started by Nov. 19. The procedure is generally supported by 10 HVAC technicians, or about one-third of the HVAC workforce, who will do the seasonal changeover. The turn-on cycle normally takes three weeks, and once it is completed, the focus will shift to equipment efficiency and 100-percent availability of systems.

About one week into the cycle, the balance of available HVAC technicians will join the changeover team to ensure completion within a maximum of three weeks.

Why three weeks?

While most people are



Did you know?

By Col. Paul Hossenlopp
Fort Sill Garrison commander

accustomed to the options of their residential HVAC systems, one must first recognize the installation systems number is in the thousands.

A typical residential system can control temperature during summer or winter with the simple flip of the switch made at the thermostat. In contrast, a typical administration building with a commercial HVAC system consists of a boiler to provide heat, a chiller that produces air conditioning, and in most cases, multiple indoor air units to distribute the conditioned air. The two systems consisting of heating boilers and AC chillers, when placed at a military installation, run independently of each other requiring additional steps during start-up.

One may ask, with all the

additional maintenance requirements and time required to change from heating to cooling modes, why does the military not use residential systems? The equipment selection is based purely on design capability and economics at the time of construction. The commercial systems historically provided higher efficiency and a lower operating cost over the life of the system.

Some people may believe they have grounds for special consideration during these changeover period and there is a process to apply for this.

While circumstances of life and safety should be reported without further consideration, such cases will be handled with priority. Other categories of request

for special considerations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to the Directorate of Public Works - operations and maintenance division.

Ultimately, decisions will be based on minimizing the impact to post or mission productivity. Further considerations will be given to the HVAC workforce, their level of productivity and the overall success of the changeover operation.

How can I participate?

Upon notification of changeover cycle, allow 10 working days before issuing a service order. Generally, the HVAC staff is aware if a problem exists and the response times dedicated to untimely service orders requires staffing.

People should only submit requests for special considerations if at all possible.

Because Oklahoma's weather can be so unpredictable, warm days are still possible. Should this happen after the heating system is turned on, open a window,

prop a door open or turn on a fan. Another way to decrease the heat of a conditioned building or room is to turn off unused office equipment, such as computers, fax machines or lighting and supporting items such as coffee pots.

The goal of the Fort Sill Garrison is to provide comfort to all people who live and work on the installation while minimizing impact to productivity. As demonstrated over past years, the transition from cooling to heating is not as simple as flipping a switch. While we all share the potential of slight discomforts in the coming days and through the transition to heating season, DPW and HVAC technicians will work to meet this goal as expeditiously as we permit.

For more information or recommendations, contact Chris Brown, DPW energy manager, at 442-6129 or e-mail him at christopher.brown136@us.army.mil.

More help for military spouses seeking jobs, careers

WASHINGTON — Two dozen new companies have put their hat in the ring to make it easier for spouses of service members to find and keep meaningful, career-oriented, portable employment.

During the opening hours of the 2011 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, D.C., Oct. 10, the 24 companies signed on to be part of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership. MSEP is a group of companies,

with the addition of the new partners, which is now 96 strong.

"They support military spouses in their employment and career efforts by offering jobs that are portable," said Robert Gordon III, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for military community and family policy. "That means the companies provide support and commitment that when a military spouse has to move, their employment opportunities will continue with that company."

While most of the partners are U.S.-

based, Gordon said some have "global reach."

"We do look for companies also that have a global footprint, since our military community members live overseas," Gordon said.

On the MSEP website, there are now 54,000 jobs available, but Gordon said there are even more available through the human resources departments of the partner companies.

"We are leveling the playing field for our

spouses, since our spouses have a 26-percent unemployment rate and a 25-percent wage gap," Gordon said. "As we all know, with deployment and moves overseas, often times our spouses have difficulty finding and keeping jobs and careers."

The MSEP program only began serving spouses of all military service members in June. Since then, it has provided employment to some 5,600 military spouses.

The MSEP program website can be found at: www.msepjobs.com.

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ness Thursday before the following Thursday's issue.

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