

# FORT SILL QUARTERLY ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

Spring 2014



This newsletter provides helpful household and unit tips for protecting the environment and complying with environmental laws and regulations.

## Spill Response

Training for and conducting combat operations is risky business and most of us who live or work on Ft. Sill understand this. However there are some whose only focus is steel on target in the impact area.

Few will dispute that Ft. Sill has many missions to accomplish, and most agree that as an Installation we do a great job. As my first drill sergeant once said, "We train like we will fight", and later stated "survival is a result of

attention to detail". Both quotes remain relevant now thirty-five years later.

This quarter's topic is not one of the glamorous earth shaking missions that Ft. Sill is known. This topic is just as vital because failing to properly respond to it can have an impact on others around us to include; men, women, children, those in uniform, or not, people living in the barracks, at home, while in the field, or working in the motor pool. This topic affects us all, and can often be remedied by attention to detail and a little effort on your part.



Hazardous Material / Hazardous Waste (HM/ HW) spills not only create a health risk, but can also be detrimental to a unit's training budget or an individual's bank account. An environmental notice of violation can cost big dollars, while multiple violations can be exponentially catastrophic. By doing the right things we can avoid the costs associated with the wrong things.

*Spills Are Preventable!*

## If a Spill Occurs Take Action Immediately to Prevent Damage to the Environment.

The bottom line is that HM/HW is present in almost every setting in our daily lives because we see it all the time, many will not provide it the attention it deserves. All HM/HW are listed as hazardous because if not handled correctly they can cause bodily harm or death. There are too many substances to cover them all in this newsletter, so we will only touch on a few, and how we as professionals, fathers and mothers should respond.

The good news is that most spills on the Installation are small, which in environmental terms is less than 5 gallons and is normally either a petroleum or anti-freeze product.

The bad news is that anti-freeze is toxic if ingested by human or a pet. Oil is present in every vehicle on post and it only takes 1 drop of oil to contaminate ten and a half gallons of water.



Ignoring a spill, even a few drops, only makes a bad situation worse.

Take a short hike from your driveway, barracks or motor pool and you will likely have to step across a ditch or stream bed and it doesn't take a lot of water to make your little problem someone else's bigger problem.



The main point of this information paper is that spills and especially HM/HW spills are often preventable, but if they occur, do not pass them by. Take action to correct the situation so it does not put others at risk.

DODD 5030.41 requires that units or activities with POL or HM must develop a spill prevention plan.

AR 200-1 states that personnel should be trained with-in 90 days of assignment to a unit and annually after that to maintain proficiency.

Do you have a spill contingency plan? What is supposed to happen in the event of a spill? Having a spill plan is recommended anytime gas, diesel, oil or other HM is kept.

*Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*

## If a Spill Occurs Take Action Immediately to Prevent Damage to the Environment.

On the job or at home, spill response should be practiced just like any other military exercise.

When responding to a spill remember the acronym REACT:

- Remove the source
- Envelop the spill
- Absorb/ accumulate
- Containerize/ clean-up
- Tell your supervisor

### Things to know beforehand:

Who do we need to contact?

Are POC's names and telephone numbers on hand?

Do we have hazardous materials/ waste that may require protective gear? You will know if you have read you're Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

What types of hazardous materials/ wastes are in the area? Inventory

If larger than 5 gallons it must be reported to Ft. Sill environmental and the Ft. Sill fire department.

What supplies are on hand in the event of a spill? Do we have dry sweep, cat litter, sand, absorbent booms, shovels and a broom?

A recent event comes to mind about having personnel trained on spill response. The vehicle operator decided to loosen hull plates on his vehicle so that when driven through the vehicle wash facility (bird bath) the sludge in the floor would get washed out (bad idea and not allowed). After returning to the motor pool the vehicle was taken into the shop for repair. When entering the bay all of the contaminated water/ petroleum sloshed out the back end of the vehicle and headed straight towards the storm drain. The soldiers knew what actions to take and the approximate 20 gallons of HW never made it into the drain (good plan). Another take away from this is that any fluid and sludge from the hulls of military vehicles must be collected and contained in 55 gallon drums for turn in to EQD.

Now we will mention a couple of things about Mobile Fuel Tanker Purging. EQD recently had to remove 10-20 gallons of JP8 from an oil/water separator connected to a wash rack where several Mobile fuel Tankers released purge water and solution. Most likely the JP8 came from fuel components on the refuelers

*Reduce, Reuse, Recycle*

## Practice Spill Response.

that were not properly drained prior to purging. Be aware that even a small quantity of residual fuel can cause a flammable atmosphere even after the refueler has initially been deemed explosion proof. The other problem here is that oil/water separators are not meant to hold fuel for two reasons. First, oil/water separators only work dependably on small amounts of heavier weight oils and lubricants in wash water. Large amounts of lighter weight petroleum and fuels can bypass the oil/water separator and wind up in the sanitary sewer collection system which leads to the second point. Fuel in an oil/water separator causes a flammable environment. The same can be said for a waste water treatment plant. All fuel components must be drained or removed as necessary prior to purging. EQD also recommends that all mobile fuel tankers that are being purged should only release the

purge water and solution at EQD's wash rack. This wash rack is properly maintained and of sufficient capacity for this operation which can also be monitored by EQD staff to ensure the fuel is not entering the sanitary sewer. A TACOM Ground Precautionary Message hand-out is available at EQD which provides more details on how to properly purge a Mobile Fuel Tanker.

We close this newsletter with the reminder that not every mission we complete will be as impressive as steel on target, but every mission accomplished needs to be completed with the mindset that "we train like we fight" and "survival is a result of attention to detail".

### **Did you know: April 22 is Earth Day?**

Army environmental programs enable necessary mission training and operations by minimizing environmental impacts and identifying environmental vulnerabilities so risks can be mitigated

**For further information about compliance with environmental laws / regulations please contact Environmental Quality Division, DPW, 580-442-3266.**

*Practice, Practice, Practice*