

FORT SILL QUARTERLY ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

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Hazardous Substances and the Community's Right-To-Know

- **Emergency Planning and the Community
Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA)**

In response to the growing concern regarding the effects of toxic and hazardous substances on humans and the environment, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) addressed in Executive Order 12856 became law. EPCRA provides local governments information concerning possible chemical hazards and requires emergency planning for releases of extremely hazardous substances. EPCRA informs potentially affected populations of the types and quantities of hazardous materials which are present in living and work places. EPCRA allows each individual to judge the potential personal risk resulting from living or working in a specific area and allows for effective

emergency procedures in the event of a spill or other uncontrolled releases of hazardous materials.

Department of Defense (DoD) policy states that all DoD military and civilian personnel shall be aware of the provisions of EPCRA and how it may pertain to their respective mission. Pollution prevention is a major consideration under EPCRA, and requires each unit and facility to develop a pollution prevention policy, and plan for implementation. The primary goal is to reduce hazardous material inventory and releases.

Commanders have the basic responsibility for understanding, managing, and reducing risks posed by chemicals and their unit, and for dealing with emergencies within their unit/facility.

Units/facilities are responsible for gathering information on the chemicals used, stored, and

released into the environment; for providing information to the Environmental Office and for helping set up procedures to handle chemical emergencies.



EPCRA



The Environmental Office is responsible for ensuring that units/facilities comply with the law's requirements, that the public has access to information and annual toxic chemical releases, and that the information is used in various programs to protect the air, water, and soil.

EPCRA requires the following actions:

- (1) Development of emergency preparedness or response plans to deal with hazardous material incidents.



- (2) Emergency notification of all applicable regulatory agencies in the event of a "release" of extremely hazardous substance.
- (3) Annual preparation of an emergency and hazardous chemical inventory data which provides information to government officials and the public on potential volume of releases.



- (4) Public notification and access to extremely hazardous substance inventory data, Safety Data Sheets, Emergency Preparedness Plans, Toxic Releases Inventory data, and other data required under EPCRA.

To comply with the provisions of Executive Order 12856, and EPCRA, every level of Command is required to address the elimination of hazardous materials in accomplishment of their daily mission. An evaluation should be made to determine if a hazardous material is "mission essential". When hazardous materials are "mission essential" recycling, reutilization, nonhazardous substitutes, or revisions to engineering procedures/techniques are options in elimination of the hazardous materials. These techniques will reduce disposal cost, inventory and acquisition cost, potential for release, and be a major factor in achieving and sustaining environmental compliance. Eliminating hazardous materials is the primary solution to pollution prevention which is the answer to environmental compliance requirements.



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