

"Freebies" Drop and Swap Success Stories Aberdeen Proving Ground Laboratory Community Cleans Out and "Cleans Up"

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Three Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) laboratories saved thousands of dollars in procurement and disposal costs recently by transferring unopened, usable chemicals rather than disposing of them as hazardous waste. Ms. Kim O'Connor, an environmental specialist in the Hazardous Waste Branch of the Directorate of Safety, Health and Environment (DSHE), suggested the Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (CHPPM) contact the DSHE Pollution Prevention Program to find users for unopened, usable chemicals identified during a November 1998 laboratory clean out. The move saved taxpayers about \$10,000.

"The most effective way to prevent pollution is at the source, which is why transfer rather than disposal makes sense to me; preventing pollution at the source benefits everyone, not just one side," said Ms. O'Connor.

Because APG's primary mission is to research, develop, test and evaluate weapons systems, many installation laboratories use hazardous chemicals. While steps are taken to minimize the amount of solid and hazardous wastes that result from testing operations, sometimes the use of hazardous chemicals is unavoidable. To minimize the purchase and disposal of chemicals, a list of all excess, unopened, usable materials must be provided to the installation HAZMART and/or the DSHE Pollution Prevention Program prior to disposal. The information is shared with other installation organizations that may need the materials.

In this case, the Pollution Prevention Program staff inventoried CHPPM's usable materials and provided a list to other APG tenant organizations that conduct similar testing operations. Within 24 hours, the Army Research Laboratory (ARL) and the Medical Research Institute for Chemical Defense (MRICD) picked up approximately 110 chemicals and chemical products.

ARL and MRICD saved over \$9,000 by receiving the items through a transfer instead of ordering them as new purchases. All materials received in a transfer are free. "We were very pleased to be able to do this free chemical transfer. Thanks [to DSHE] for letting us know about CHPPM's clean out," said ARL Pharmacy Manager Mr. Jamie Lariviere, a hazardous materials technician with HAZMED at ARL. ARL also conducted an inner-activity trade of approximately 340 chemicals, saving an additional \$970 in chemical purchases and another \$625 in waste disposal costs.

Less significant but equally important savings were derived from the reduction in waste. The transfer of materials from CHPPM reduced the wastes from that clean out by 265 pounds (about 9% of the total disposed). This reduction is significant for two reasons: reducing the amount of hazardous wastes generated by APG is a requirement of Executive Order 12856 and Army Regulation 200-1; and disposal of this classification of hazardous waste costs \$1.86 per pound, or \$490 in this case. Over time, disposal costs, combined with the initial purchase price of the chemicals, could add substantially to the cost of weapons.

In addition, ARL recently accepted 460 pounds of chemicals from the Maryland National Guard at Edgewood, saving \$1,822 in initial purchases and \$856 in wastes. “Thanks for the information,” said Hazardous Materials Technician Ms. Karen Ferguson, an environmental manager with HAZMED at the ARL Risk Management Office. “We were just about to order some of the chemicals we received from the National Guard. The materials exchange through the Freebies program is working for us.” The Freebies program is not just for hazardous materials. ARL also received over \$17,600 in glassware and other non-chemical laboratory materials from CHPPM. “The scientists were thrilled; this glassware is expensive,” said Mr. Lariviere.

With the cooperation of Garrison and tenant organizations, DSHE will have more Freebies program success stories to share. If your organization or office needs chemicals, chemical products, or other hazardous materials, we can help you determine if there are excess supplies on the installation. Likewise, if you have excess products, we can help you transfer them to another organization. For additional information or assistance, call the DSHE Pollution Prevention office at 410-306-2274.