

JBLM environmental advisers support mission sustainability

By Cathy Hamilton-Wissmer, Joint Base Lewis-McChord Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division January 26, 2021



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JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. – Joint Base Lewis-McChord has a strong sustainability and environmental compliance program. Multiple environmental advisers and other resources are available to help units and organizations comply with the various legal, regulatory and policy requirements needed for proper management of their environmental program -- with an emphasis on preventing pollution.

Pollution prevention is any practice that reduces, eliminates or prevents pollution at its source, also known as source reduction. Source reduction is fundamentally different and more desirable than recycling, treatment and disposal. It

focuses on minimizing and streamlining what resources are used on the front end so that money and resources are not wasted on the back end of any process

There are significant opportunities to reduce or prevent pollution at the source through cost-effective changes in production, operation and raw materials use. The opportunities for source reduction are often not realized because existing regulations focus upon treatment and disposal.

“Environmental advisers are a living continuity book,” said environmental adviser Corey Widman.

Widman sets up an environmental binder with his units on McChord Field and stresses that if you spend a little bit of time each day doing the housekeeping necessary to maintain environmental compliance, you’ll be in good shape -- should there be a no-notice inspection by any regulator.

“Inspectors are kind of like cereal -- all different kinds,” Widman said. “Having a positive relationship with my units or organizations makes it easier to be available, should anything come up. Feel free to reach out with any environmental question.”

Widman checks in with Noel Carlson, supply chain specialist at Boeing on McChord Field. Boeing works with the JBLM Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division to accomplish all of the C-17 Globemaster III engine maintenance. Engines come to JBLM from other bases to be upgraded, then shipped back.

“Boeing is the ‘tip of the spear,’” Widman said. “There are 48 C-17s on JBLM, and all have a mission. Boeing needs supplies when they need them, and they have a successful hazardous materials program because of the attention to detail.”

To order hazardous material on JBLM, one must have the item on an authorized use list approved by DPW Environmental.

“Too often, environmental programs can be seen as a competing priority,” Widman said. “The perception is that units focus on readiness or compliance, but the truth is that proper supply chain management is not just a readiness issue for units; it is also an environmental concern. Proper management of hazardous materials supports mission sustainability.”

Environmental management is taken seriously on JBLM, recognizing the U.S. Army’s triple bottom line plus of sustainability: mission, environment, community and economic benefit.

“JBLM strives to be compliant with environmental law, but we set compliance as our ‘floor’, not our ceiling,” said Cindy Trout, JBLM DPW Environmental Division chief. “JBLM goes beyond compliance to address situations that could constrain our ability to be a premier training platform by getting ahead of potential environmental and community problems before they become critical issues and affect our mission.”

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