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Qualified Recycling Program

Environmental protection specialist at your service

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When you think about the hazardous waste used on a military Industrial complex, you may not necessarily consider the waste a misplaced resource, but that is exactly what it is.

For example, on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, recycled oil is a commodity. It is filtered, recycled and used as bunker oil in ships. Empty oil cans are crushed and recycled for their metal content.

All proceeds from the Qualified Recycling Program on JBLM go back into Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs.

The environmental protection specialists — also known as hazardous waste technicians — from the environmental division of JBLM'S Directorate of Public Works want to help units recover as many resources as possible.

They assist to ensure units do not go out of environmental compliance or wrongly dispose of an out of date toxic, combustible or flammable product.

Besides recycling oil, did you know that mercury light bulbs are also recycled here at JBLM?

Fluorescent and HID lights contain mercury, a toxic heavy metal and are illegal to throw out with regular garbage.

The recycling program works to ensure no mercury gets into the environment by capturing the unbroken tubes for recycle. If you break a compact fluorescent light bulb, avoid breathing vapors or touching broken materials.

Use stiff paper or cardboard to pick up large pieces and use duct tape to pick up small pieces and powder, wipe the area clean with a damp paper towel and place all materials in a sealed container with a good lid.

Wash your hands and dispose of at the household hazardous waste site at the environmental division facility at Building 1210, Monday-Thursday from 1 to 3:30 p.m. and Friday from 1 to 3 p.m.

Victor Rodelo, an environmental protection specialist, assists units with their hazardous waste disposal needs. He finds the primary challenge for units is when “a unit is busy with a mission or deployed and the key to the SAA shed is given to an untrained individual,” Rodelo said. “In one situation, corrosives were mixed in the drum with adhesives — the drum was refused (from pickup). The unit had to sort out the solids. It could be a dangerous situation.”

Education is also the best way to prepare your rear detachment so that the unit can continue maintenance when the regular environmental officer and unit is away. Besides offering the environmental operations management class, EPS/hazardous waste technicians can assist with a walk through before inspections, make sure drums are labeled correctly, nothing is too full or out of date.

They can also assist by picking up any drums of hazardous waste that are ready to go.

Call 253-967-4786 to register for environmental operations management class or to reach your environmental protection specialist.

Environmental operations management classes and annual refreshers are available for active, DOD and contractors on a weekly basis at Building 1210.

For more information, visit Sustainable JBLM Facebook at facebook.com/SustainableJBLM.

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