

JBLM pursues sustainable purchasing

By Ben Saddoris, Joint Base Lewis-McChord Sustainable Acquisition Program Coordinator March 13, 2019



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Glenn Young, a former Directorate of Public Works employee, stripes a parking lot on Joint Base Lewis-McChord in May 2015. DPW is testing a plant-based traffic paint with lower toxicity than solvent-borne paints while reducing operator requirements in comparison to other waterborne options. *(Photo Credit: George Handy)*
VIEW ORIGINAL [<https://www.army.mil/e2/c/images/2019/03/13/545829/original.jpg>]

Some people think the processes for military training or equipment maintenance on Joint Base Lewis-McChord may negatively impact the environment. However, the process that likely has the largest effect is much more common and pervasive -- the purchase of goods and services.

Collectively, procurement choices can produce significant and lasting impact. Those impacts, on JBLM and communities everywhere, come from products' life cycles, from extraction and manufacture to transport, use and disposal.

For this reason, the federal government mandates a series of procurement laws aimed at recycled content and waste reduction, fossil fuel alternatives, energy and water efficiency, green electronics and reduced toxicity.

Together these mandates are referred to as sustainable acquisition and offer an opportunity to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of purchasing and operations. This is because sustainable purchasing results in less waste and complication by improving health and safety, conserving resources and reducing liability, management and maintenance requirements.

Although earlier market realities supported the perception that sustainable alternatives must cost more or perform worse, subsequent advances have yielded products with proven cost savings and performance. Such items are being incorporated into daily operations on JBLM.

For example, facilities construction and maintenance now routinely include low volatile organic compounds coatings, recycled and plant-based components, water and energy efficiencies and improved lighting, ventilation and thermal comfort. Similarly, pest management activities operate according to integrated pest management, thereby minimizing the toxicity and amount of chemicals used.

JBLM also uses its annual environmental management system objectives to ensure organizations continuously improve the nature of their products and purchasing. This recently led to many retail operations switching the type of paper used in their cash registers.

Although not required by law, this precautionary change helps ensure the continued health and safety of both workers and customers. It was achieved without significant increase in cost or decrease in performance.

Finally, JBLM teams with the Department of Defense to field test various sustainable alternatives in order to determine their cost and performance effectiveness. Through this process, JBLM has already tested a number of products, ranging from LED chemlight alternatives to greases, motor oils, takeout food containers and traffic paint.

For more information on the JBLM Sustainable Acquisition Program, email usarmy.jblm.imcom.list.dpw-green-procurement@mail.mil or visit:

https://home.army.mil/lewis-mcchord/index.php/my-Joint-Base-Lewis-Mcchord/all-services;/public_works-environmental_divisionwww.usarmy.jblm.imcom.list.dpw-green-procurement@mail.mil;

<https://sftool.gov/greenprocurement>;

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