

Sustainability initiatives reduce hazardous air pollutants

by Susan C. Galentine
DECAM

Many activities produce air emissions in varying amounts that can contribute to health and environmental concerns. Fort Carson has set a sustainability goal to reduce some of the most harmful air emissions generated by the installation, called hazardous air pollutants or HAPS, by 50 percent in the next five years. The quantity of HAPs generated on Fort Carson were reduced by 26 percent in 2003 as compared to 2002 primarily due to changing the type of paint used for road striping.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency refers to HAPs as those chemicals that pose serious health and environmental hazards. Sources that generate HAPs on Fort Carson include gasoline dispensing, dry cleaning operations, paint shops, boilers and generators.

Fort Carson is tackling the issue of HAPs by aggressively monitoring the emissions of activities and in some cases, promoting product substitutions for less harmful chemicals that perform the same function. Several projects initiated by the cooperative work of directorates on Fort Carson have yielded positive results in improving local air quality.

- Military vehicles are painted with special chemical agent resistant coating to defeat any potential nuclear, biological or chemical agent threat to vehicle occupants. As part of Fort Carson's extensive pollution prevention, air quality and sustainability efforts, the Directorate of Logistics converted to a zero-HAP CARC paint in 2004. The new paint virtually eliminates the HAPs from painting and also reduces volatile organic compounds (organic gases) emissions. From 2003 to 2004, HAPs emissions were decreased almost 100 percent and VOCs were reduced by 59 percent due to the CARC paint conversion at the paint booth.
- Outdoor painting activities also emit HAPs into the environment. The Directorate of Public Works traffic striping operations produced 4.18 tons of HAPs in 2003. In 2004, the DPW substituted to a waterborne, low-VOC traffic paint. Through this initiative, VOC emissions were reduced by approximately 5 tons and HAPS by just over 3.5 tons from 2003 to 2004.
- The current push for producing alternative fueled vehicles is driven by rising gas prices. An additional incentive is that some of the new AFVs, such as biodiesel or electric hybrids, also emit less HAPs than gasoline-powered vehicles. In 2004, the DOL upgraded seven vehicles from the Transportation Motor Pool to run on biodiesel and five hybrid electric vehicles were acquired.

For more information about the Fort Carson Air Quality Program, call 526-6601 or 526-1708.