

MATERIEL

Dispatch

LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the constitution of the United States."

Inside this Issue

| | |
|---|----|
| Acquisition/Logistics College Degree Program Pilot | 2 |
| White House Recognizes VA Employees for Environmental Efforts | 3 |
| Acquisition and Materiel Management Fourth Annual awards..... | 3 |
| VA Celebrates the Environment | 4 |
| 2004 VA Environmental Excellence Awards..... | 6 |
| SPD Certification Requirements | 7 |
| METRICS | 7 |
| Safety Information | 8 |
| Business Review Site Schedule..... | 11 |
| GAO Report | 11 |



Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management

Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition/Logistics College Degree Program Pilot

The Federal Acquisition Reform Act of 1996, better known as the Clinger-Cohen Act, created the foundation for VA's Acquisition College Degree Program Pilot. The Act introduced a section to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), entitled "Acquisition Workforce." This provision requires specific training for the Federal acquisition workforce and others who work with the procurement process.

Building on this new requirement, the Department of Veterans Affairs entered into an agreement with Troy State University (TSU) to create and implement an undergraduate degree pilot project for VA's acquisition workforce. TSU currently provides education in over 70 disciplines to over 20,000 students at three accredited campuses in Alabama and at 57 other campuses in 17 states and 10 countries.



One of the first degree-producing initiatives within VA on such a large scale, this program is available to all VA acquisition/contract specialists. TSU will support VA in this effort by developing curriculum, evaluating participants, registering, and matriculating VA's workforce into an academic degree program. In addition, TSU will grant academic credit for many professional courses already offered by the OA&MM to its workforce. TSU also offers credit for work experience. This program is also designed to support VA employees in the Materiel Management and Logistics offices. Enrollment for the first students into this Pilot Program took place in February 2004 for classes starting in March 2004.

Any employee needing advice or counseling can contact the Troy representative, Les Wright, at 301-656-5847.

Donald Coleman

WHITE HOUSE RECOGNIZES VA EMPLOYEES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

Three VA employees have been named winners of the 2004 White House Closing the Circle Awards. This prestigious annual environmental awards program is sponsored by the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive. The awards recognize Federal employees and their facilities for efforts that resulted in significant contributions to the environment in areas governed by Executive Orders 13101, *Greening the Government Through Waste*

Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition, and 13148, Leadership in Environmental Management.

Mark Boyers of the New Mexico VA Health Care System, Albuquerque, NM, won an award in the category of Waste/Pollution Prevention for his efforts to reduce hazardous waste at his facility. **Sharon Ricketts Williams and Patricia Edington of the VA Illiana Health Care System,**

Danville, IL, were recognized with an honorable mention in the category of recycling for their "Computers for Kids" program. This year's *White House Closing the Circle Awards* program was highly competitive. Nearly 200 nominations were submitted from military and civilian Federal agencies in five categories that also included green purchasing, environmental management systems, and sustainable design/green buildings. A judging panel made up of representatives from Government entities, academia, and industry selected a total of 12 winners and 15 honorable mentions.

In order to be eligible for the 2004 White House awards program, VA employees and facilities were required first to submit nominations to the *VA Environmental Excellence Awards* program (previously known as *the VA Closing the Circle Awards* program). The Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM), which administers this program, congratulates the White House winners and is also honoring them with *2004 VA Environmental Excellence Awards* in their

respective categories. OA&MM encourages all VA employees and facilities to submit nominations for the 2005 *VA Environmental Excellence Awards* when the program opens in mid-November 2004. For additional information, contact Barbara Matos in OA&MM at 202-273-6121 or barbara.matos@mail.va.gov.

Barbara Matos



*'Waste/Pollution Prevention'
Award Winner: Mark Boyers (L) with supervisor,
Dr. Larry Massie*

Acquisition and Materiel Management Fourth Annual Awards

During the first week of November, which is designated National Acquisition and Materiel Management Week, William A. Moorman, Acting Assistant Secretary for Management, presented the fourth Annual Awards for excellence in Materiel Management and Supply, Processing, and Distribution (SPD). This year's winners were Douglas Stranman for SPD Manager of the Year and Shan Kearney for Inventory Management Technician of the Year.

Mr. Stranman supervises a traditional SPD at the VAMC St. Louis, MO, which is a multi-site medical facility with strong affiliations and 12 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics. Douglas manages the day-to-day operations of the entire SPD operation, which includes the largest SPD budget within VISN 10, numerous Total Supply Support areas, and an extensive case cart system in support of the OR.

Mr. Kearney is a supply technician in the Logistics Department at the VAMC in Topeka,

KS, which is responsible for the inventory maintenance and distribution of clean/sterile supplies. He was also instrumental in establishing many of the secondary inventory points and provides training to other technicians in the department.

The Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management congratulates both winners for their outstanding service to their customers, the medical center, and most importantly our veterans. Keep up the good work.

Chris Joseph



SPD Manager of the Year

(left to right) Charles E. Roberson, David S. Derr, Bobby Osburn, Douglas Stranman, William A. Moorman



Inventory Management – Technician of the Year

(left to right) Bobby Osburn, Shan Kearney, William A. Moorman

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CELEBRATES THE ENVIRONMENT

Each year, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) joins the Nation in celebrating two major environmental events: Earth Day and America Recycles Day. These events provide the opportunity for VA to promote environmental stewardship and to highlight the outstanding environmental efforts of its employees and facilities.

Earth Day 2004: Partnering for a More Sustainable Earth

The Federal theme for Earth Day 2004, "Partnering for a More Sustainable Earth," was reflected throughout the Earth Day Program held on April 14 at VA Central Office (VACO). Sponsored by the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM), the program featured inspiring remarks by senior VA officials, an educational presentation on the "Biobased Revolution," and a delightful performance by "The Butterflies," a pre-school class from the U.S. Kids Development Center (VACO's recycling rebates help subsidize the Center). The highlight of the program was the presentation of the 2004 VA Environmental Excellence Award in the category of education and outreach to employees from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), whose forward-thinking partnership resulted in successful projects designed to enhance environmental performance at VA medical centers.

Earth Day festivities continued into the afternoon with the first "EARTH EXPO – Green Trade Show" and a "green" purchasing seminar for VACO purchase cardholders conducted by the Chief of Staff of the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive. Initiated by OA&MM's Business Development and Marketing Team and Environmental Affairs Program Office, EARTH EXPO is designed

to raise awareness to the Federal green purchasing requirements and to the wide variety of recycled content, biobased, and other environmentally preferable products available in the marketplace. This show has since gone on the road and is being held at a number of VA facilities across the country. EARTH EXPO had the dual benefit of serving as a demonstration project for the seminar, which provided an overview of the Federal Green Purchasing Program.

VA facilities nationwide joined in celebrating Earth Day 2004 through such activities as recycling fairs and environmental awareness displays. For example, the Fargo, North Dakota, VA Medical Center and Regional Office Center once again observed "Earth Week," with activities ranging from a grounds clean-up and picnic lunch to recycling seminars and collections. Employees at the Veterans Benefits Administration Philadelphia Information Technology Center (ITC) held their first annual "Earth Day in ITC." Environmental education and outreach activities extended through the month of April. An "Earth Day Room" was set up where employees could watch environmental videos, examine recycled content products, and enjoy organic snacks.

America Recycles Day 2004: It All Comes Back to You

November 15, 2004, marked the eighth anniversary of *America Recycles Day*. This annual event focuses national attention on the importance of recycling and buying recycled content products. The theme of this year's event, "It All Comes Back to You," is a reminder that we all play a significant role in conserving natural resources. President Bush issued a Proclamation in support of America Recycles Day 2004 and called upon Federal agencies and the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate programs and activities.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) answered the President's call. At an America Recycles Day celebration held at the White House Conference Center, VA joined the Executive Office of the President and the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Interior, Justice, and Transportation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and General Services Administration in signing a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote the sustainable environmental stewardship of Federal electronic assets throughout their life cycle. As a charter signatory, VA has also become a partner in the Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC). The FEC is a voluntary program that encourages Federal entities to purchase more environmentally-sound electronic products, reduce the impacts of electronic products during use, and manage obsolete electronics in an environmentally safe way. To learn more about the FEC, visit www.federalelectronicschallenge.net.

At the America Recycles Day event hosted by the Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) on November 16 at VA Central Office, William A. Moorman, then Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and VA's Environmental Executive, announced VA's signing of the electronics MOU and highlighted the importance of recycling to environmental sustainability. Mr. Moorman joined David S. Derr, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Materiel Management, in presenting the 2004 VA Environmental Excellence Award in the category of recycling to employees from the VA Illiana Health Care System. Following the ceremony, green products representatives, including from the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program, UNICOR Electronics Recycling, Boise Office Solutions, Corporate Express, and Medical Place, Inc., participated in VACO's second EARTH EXPO – Green Trade Show of the year. Guests were invited to test

2004 VA Environmental Excellence Awards

Department of Veterans Affairs' employees won awards in three different categories in the 2004 VA Environmental Excellence Awards Program. And, new for 2004, the awards were presented at three different times during the year.

In April, in conjunction with Earth Day, the VA Environmental Excellence Award in the category of outreach and education was given to employees of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Arnold Bierenbaum and Jack Staudt, Office of the Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management; Linda Martin, Center for Engineering and Occupational Safety and Health in St. Louis, Missouri; and Marilyn Waggoner, Veterans Health Care System in Austin, Texas, teamed with EPA Headquarters' employees to improve environmental programs at several VA medical centers through media-based environmental compliance training for senior managers and voluntary environmental management reviews.

The final VA Environmental Excellence Award of the year in the category of recycling was presented on November 16 in conjunction with America Recycles Day. Sharon Ricketts Williams and Patricia Edington of the VA Illiana Health Care System, located in Danville, Illinois, received the award for their "Computers for Kids" Recycling Program. This environmental award-winning recycling duo also won an Honorable Mention in the 2004 White House Closing the Circle Awards Program.

Nominations for the 2005 VA Environmental Excellence Awards Program closed January 5, 2005. VA winners will be eligible to compete in the 2005 White House Closing the Circle Awards Program.

(continued from page 5)

their knowledge by taking a "Recycling and Buy Recycled" quiz at OA&MM's environmental display.

For more information about Earth Day or America Recycles Day, or to learn more about recycling or green purchasing, visit OA&MM's *Environmental Affairs—Greening VA* web site at vaww1.va.gov/oamm/recycle.

Barbara Matos



At VACO's America Recycles Day celebration on November 16, Mike Morley, Director, VHA Environmental Programs Service, Office of Facilities Management (l.), joined William A. Moorman, then Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and VA's Environmental Executive (2nd from r.), in presenting the 2004 VA Environmental Excellence Award to Sharon Ricketts Williams of the VA Illiana Health Care System (IHCS) and IHCS Director Mark Magill.



William A. Moorman, then Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and VA Environmental Executive (c.), reads the inscription on the 2004 VA Environmental Excellence Award to award recipient Sharon Ricketts Williams of the VA Illiana Health Care System (IHCS) and IHCS Director Mark Magill. The award in the category of recycling was presented at VA Central Office on November 16 in conjunction with America Recycles Day.



William A. Moorman, then Acting Assistant Secretary for Management and VA Environmental Executive, presents the 2004 VA Environmental Excellence Award to award recipient Sharon Ricketts Williams of the VA Illiana Health Care System (IHCS). The award ceremony was held at VA Central Office on November 16 in conjunction with America Recycles Day.

SUPPLY, PROCESSING, AND DISTRIBUTION (SPD)

Certification Requirements

Prior to requesting Level 2 Certification Test, supervisors must verify that the employee has achieved a minimum of 80 percent on each of the Level 1 ten chapter post tests. Instruction for Level 1 is to be given in a classroom setting.

Upon completion of Level 1 instruction and testing, Level 2 (SPD Certification Test) may be requested. The test must be proctored, and employees have a maximum of 4 hours to complete. The employee must take the complete test at one time, and the test must not be kept at the facility longer than 30 days. Please verify that all of the following information is included in your request.

1. Station Number and Location
2. To whom the test is to be mailed.
Include: Name, Title, and Mail Symbol
Street Address
City, State, Zip
Contact Phone Number
3. Who the test is for:
Include: Name (as it is to appear on the certificate)
Last 4 - Social Security Number
Home mailing address
(Street, City, State, Zip)

Requests may be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to Bonnie Tullberg and/or Chris Joseph at VA Central Office.

Please return completed test via FedEx.

C. Joseph

METRICS

Bet you haven't heard that term in a while!

The Office of Acquisition and Materiel Management (OA&MM) is breathing new life into this program.

The Metric Transition Plan has not gone away. VA is still required to comply with established laws and executive orders governing this program. Which countries besides the United States do not use the metric system? Liberia and Myanmar (also known as Burma). As you can see, the United States (US) is behind the power curve, but use of the metric system in the US is ever growing, especially linked with wider acceptance of global standards which are mostly in metric measurements. Just as English has become the global language of commerce, the metric system has become the global language of measurement. Although nearly every country has taken steps to replace traditional measurements, the fact remains that among countries with non-metric usage the US is the only significant holdout. Most other countries have either used the metric system for many years or have adopted the metric system within the last 30 to 40 years. There is controversy about how to define whether a country is metric. Metrication is a process that does not happen all at once, but rather a process that happens over time.

Therefore, it is incumbent on all of us, as VA employees, to become familiar with your local Metric Transition Plan and your individual responsibilities and start doing your part! Remember, annual metric reporting is still a requirement. If any assistance or guidance is needed regarding the Metric Plan, please contact Jim Teal at (202) 273-5873.

J. Teal

SAFETY INFORMATION

Ten Common Questions

1. **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) – Same product, different manufacturer....?**
2. **When is a MSDS not required....?**
3. **Eyewash Stations – Tell me about....?**
4. **MSDSs by computer or phone?**
5. **MSDSs for household products....?**
6. **Formaldehyde exposure...?**
7. **Training frequency?**
8. **Training subjects?**
9. **Discipline issues?**
10. **Written Hazard Communication Plan?**



1. **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) Same product, different manufacturers... ?**

Do I need an MSDS from each manufacturer of each product, especially common products like peroxide and alcohol. What if the manufacturer and product names on the MSDS supplied to me by my distributor are different from the names on the container's label.

Some OSHA inspectors require an MSDS from each manufacturer of each product. Others do not. The general OSHA position is that if the employer can prove that two products are identical even if from two suppliers only one MSDS is required. Employees may be confused, however. To prevent this, get an MSDS from each manufacturer or write alternate manufacturer's names on the MSDS you do have.

2. **When is a MSDS not required?**

In the same frame, OSHA has determined that the name of the manufacturer on the MSDS and label need not match if the employer is

certain the MSDS refers to the actual product in the container. This is an issue when a distributor "private labels" and/or renames a product but does not want the responsibility of having their name on the MSDS. In this case, the distributor issues the MSDS from the original manufacturer. Although OSHA finds this to be an acceptable practice, it can lead to much confusion on the part of employees. We recommend that if this happens to you, use a marker to write in the product and manufacturer names from the label on the MSDS and instruct employees about the situation.

3. **Eyewash Stations Tell me about ... ?**

Do I need an eyewash station? Where do I get it? What are the requirements?

Federal rules specifically require an eyewash station whenever corrosive materials or formaldehyde in concentrations greater than 0.1% are used. General OSHA standards also require that you have appropriate safety equipment. Most of your MSDSs will reference flushing eyes if the material is splashed in them, so an eyewash station is prudent.

Some states require eyewash stations if any materials are used which could be either irritating or damaging to the eyes. In all probability you need at least one eyewash station.

You can get eyewash stations from safety catalogs or your local safety supply house. Check the yellow pages for the number. Make sure that the station you purchase comes with a statement from the manufacturer that it meets ANSI standards. Do not hook it up to a faucet until you have disabled the hot water supply, or hook it directly into the cold water line.

Eyewash stations must provide at least 0.4 gallons per minute of cool or tepid water to both eyes simultaneously. They must be able to be turned on with a single motion and must stay on for at least 15 minutes of hands-free operation. They must be tested regularly. Place the station where it can be readily accessed by those in most risk of eye injury (handlers of bleach, formaldehyde products, pesticides, cytotoxic drugs). It cannot be in a restroom, upstairs, through closed doors, or around several corners. To determine the best location, imagine that someone has just tossed a half cup of bleach in your face. Where would you want the eyewash station?

4. MSDSs by computer or phone?

If you are sure that what you want is to have MSDSs on a computer, almost any CD you buy may be missing up to 40% of the MSDSs you really need. Several companies offer a service where you pay an annual fee, give them a list of your hazardous materials, and they guarantee to make them available to anyone who calls within 10 minutes to 24 hours, depending on the circumstances. They will either go about trying to find the oddball MSDSs for you or will ask you to send them to them one time and they will keep track of updates thereafter. You will need to give them a clean list with the product numbers

and manufacturer name for each product. No service can ever take the burden from you of knowing what you have.

If you opt to go with electronic access to MSDSs, you will have the burden of making sure you can pass the accessibility test. Your training will have worked if an OSHA inspector walked up to your most difficult employee, asked for an MSDS, and the employee knew what an MSDS is, could get to the computer, turn it on, call up the right software, and find the right MSDS, all within less than 10 minutes from the time they were asked on the top floor of the building, away from computers... Or, if you go with a service, they can get to a phone, dial, know the product name and product number and knew which fax machine to pick up the MSDS when it comes in 10 minutes later.

A word of warning about databases, computer services, and the like - the employer is required to have looked at each MSDS to assure themselves that they understand the hazards and protective measures required before employees use it. You are not supposed to wait until you have an injured employee to look at the MSDSs to figure it out. As you plan out your system, remember why MSDSs exist (other than to satisfy some government bureaucrat). They actually contain useful information that will sometimes make you go "Hmmmmm."

5. MSDSs for household products... ?

Do I need MSDSs for items I buy at the grocery, hardware, or discount store?

Yes. Simply ask the service manager or store manager for MSDSs for the products you purchase from them. In most cases they will mail or fax them to you or will refer you to a corporate "800" number. When you call, be ready with the product name and the item number, model number, color, flavor... to help them identify the right product.

In rarer cases, even the store manager may be unfamiliar with the business's responsibility to supply you with MSDSs. In these cases you can contact the product manufacturer directly using a number or address from the container itself.

6. Formaldehyde Exposure... ?

Does everyone who works around formaldehyde need to wear a formaldehyde monitoring badge?

No. Employers are required to monitor for formaldehyde exposure only if there is some reason to believe that exposure may be at, near, or over legal limits. For example, over-exposure in a veterinary care environment is extremely unlikely because of the small quantities used. In studies of human medical facilities, the formaldehyde use situations identified as problematic involved people working with formaldehyde in small, poorly ventilated laboratories for 8 hours a day or people using formaldehyde-based disinfectants over large surfaces in closed rooms.

7. Training Frequency?

How often do I have to train my employees?

In general, employees should be trained before working with hazardous materials, whenever materials or procedures change, and whenever they forget what you told them the last time. Employees are supposed to be constantly aware of the hazards they face and the protective equipment and procedures you require for their safety. "Training" can be a formal session with manuals or a video or discussion with a supervisor about a specific issue.

8. Training Subjects?

What do my employees have to learn under Right to Know?

Employees must know their rights and responsibilities when handling hazardous

materials. They must know what an MSDS is, how to use it, and where to find a specific one in 5 minutes or less. They must know how to interpret the container and pipe labeling systems that are used in the workplace. They must know which materials are hazardous, how to tell when they are overexposed to them, how to handle them normally and in emergencies, and how to protect themselves from them.

Your training must be effective. To test your workplace, stop employees at random and do the following:

Ask to see an MSDS for a particular product. (If they say "What's an MSDS?" your training is not good enough. If it took them more than 5 minutes to find the right one, your MSDS storage system and training are not good enough. If they say "No habla English" and then take you to a bilingual person for help, you get extra points for a tough situation and very good training.

Ask an employee to explain your secondary container warning labels. Were they right?

Point to a container of hazardous materials and ask if they are required to wear gloves when using the material. Did they know? Were they right?

9. Discipline Issues

What do I do if an employee keeps forgetting to wear protective eyewear, or says they will take responsibility for not using it?

Use of protective equipment is never discretionary. It is clearly a condition of employment. Follow the same progressive disciplinary procedures you would use with someone who comes in late, takes long lunch breaks, or fails to follow other rules. When counseling the employee, make sure they know the procedure is for their protection, that it is your rule, and they do not get to choose whether or not to follow it. Make sure that you follow the rules yourself

as employees will notice if you do not take them seriously yourself.

10. Written Hazard Communication Plan?

What is the Right to Know or "Hazcom" Plan?

This is one of many written plan requirements throughout the OSHA regulations. This one applies to those whose employees could be exposed to hazardous materials in the workplace. OSHA requires that you write a plan that explains how you will comply with the Hazard Communication rule, and then keep it up to date. It must explain how your labeling system works, how you will store MSDSs, and keep the collection up to date. It explains how you identify hazardous materials. It lists the subjects included in your training and tells how often it is updated. It explains how you will communicate with contractors about hazards they bring to or encounter in your workplace.

This plan is different from the following plans that may also be required: Lock Out/Tag Out, Emergency Action, Respiratory Protection, Confined Space, Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control, Fire Prevention, Illness and Injury Prevention, and Hearing Conservation.

You can find other helpful information from www.oshastuff.com.

Business Review Site Visit Schedule

The following is a tentative schedule for Business Review Site Visits for the Second Quarter of FY 2005.

No dates are to be considered formalized until the Medical Center Director has been notified.

February – March 2005

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Feb. 14 – 18, 2005 | VAMC Long Beach, CA |
| Feb. 14 – 18, 2005 | VAMC New Orleans, LA |
| Feb. 28 – Mar. 4, 2005 | VAMC San Francisco, CA |
| Feb. 28 – Mar. 4, 2005 | VAOPC Las Vegas, NV |
| Feb. 28 – Mar. 4, 2005 | VA NCHCS (Martinez), CA |
| Mar. 14 – Mar. 18, 2005 | VAMC East Orange/Lyons, NJ |
| Mar. 28 – Apr. 5, 2005 | VAMC Biloxi, MS |

Mark Your Calendars – Upcoming Events

New Manager's Training

March 14 – 18, 2005, Dallas, TX
(Service Chiefs and Clinical Line Managers)

Materiel Management Seminar

March 28 – April 1, 2005, Memphis, TN

Materiel Management Seminar

(June or July) Albany, NY

GENERAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

General Accountability Office (GAO) Report dated July 2004

The GAO conducted an inspection of six VA medical centers in July of this past year. Their results indicated that improvement in areas of accountability is needed. Some of the findings included:

- Clarify existing guidance and establish consistent parameters for personal property that is required to be accounted

for in property control records and that is subject to physical inventory to include sensitive items.

- Provide a more comprehensive list of the type of property that is considered sensitive for accountability purposes.
- Direct that physical inventories of personal property be performed by the Acquisition

OA&MM MATERIEL DISPATCH

and Materiel Management (A&MM) staff or other parties who are independent of those with property custodian responsibilities.

- Reinforce VA's requirements to attach bar code labels to agency personal property.

VA has established policy concerning property accounting that addresses these findings. However, there is a need to enhance and expand upon our existing policies. For example, a VA Notice has been drafted and will be forth coming which provides a list of sensitive items below the current \$5,000 threshold that will require inventorying. Along with this change, the notice will require that all inventories be conducted annually, regardless of the previous accuracy rate.

We do agree that a better inventory management system is needed, and we were expecting this with CoreFLS. However, requiring A&MM staff or other independent parties to conduct the inventories, as suggested by GAO, may not be the appropriate thing to do. Rather, greater diligence in observing current policies is needed and holding responsible officials accountable when items come up missing.

Ensuring that the equipment is properly bar coded is also very important. The bar code label is an essential part of equipment accountability. When a bar code label appears on a piece of equipment, it means it has been entered into the Automated Engineering Management System/Medical Equipment Reporting System (AEMS/MERS). Property Management uses this system for control and accountability purposes, and Facilities Management uses it for quality assurance and preventive maintenance scheduling as mandated by the Joint Commission on

Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). Therefore, we all share a vested interest in the accuracy of the Equipment Inventory Records as it effects both daily operations and program responsibilities throughout a medical center.

Let us do our best to ensure we are performing in a correct and efficient manner regarding inventory management principals, rules, and regulations. This way, we are ensured of success!

J. Teal

We encourage all constructive comments and recommendations on how to better serve our customers. Information and articles for publication are welcomed and should be sent to:

Materiel Management Assistance Staff

Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20420
Telephone (202) 273-8834

Charles E. Roberson Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Program Management and
Operations

Editorial Board:

Chris Joseph Materiel Management
Assistance Staff

Design:

Cynthia Harvey-Pryor Publications
Service



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS