

June 8, 2001

POLLUTION PREVENTION (P2) PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive assigns responsibility and describes procedures for the implementation of pollution prevention (P2) programs throughout VHA.

2. BACKGROUND

a. VHA is committed to environmental leadership in creating programs of environmental excellence and will effectively support the national P2 policy through education and training, acquisition and procurement, facility management practices, environmental management and leadership, and VHA encourages innovative P2 practices and technologies.

b. The Federal Pollution Prevention Act formally establishes P2 as a national objective and defines P2 as source reduction and other practices that reduce or eliminate the creation of pollutants. This act establishes a hierarchy of environmental protection consisting of prevention or source reduction, recycling, treatment and disposal into the environment. The most desirable method of pollution abatement is prevention or source reduction. Disposal or other releases into the environment should be done only as a last resort and then in an environmentally safe manner.

c. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) covers the generation, treatment, storage, disposal and transportation of both hazardous and non-hazardous waste and emphasizes source reduction as the highest priority. RCRA requires the “cradle-to-grave” management of hazardous waste (HW), encourages recycling and reuse, and further requires HW generators and treatment, storage, and disposal facility owners to certify that the generator has a program in place to “reduce the volume or quantity and toxicity” of waste.

d. Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) is also known as The Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA). This Act is comprised of four distinct parts:

- (1) Emergency planning,
- (2) Emergency notification,
- (3) Community right-to-know, and
- (4) Toxic chemical release reporting.

***NOTE:** The intent of the community right-to-know provision is to provide protection for emergency responders, the local community and the environment from toxic and hazardous materials and their emissions.*

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e. Executive Order (EO) 13101, Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition, is a policy document for resource conservation and pollution prevention. EO 13101 directs each Federal agency to set measurable goals for recycling and solid waste reduction and requires specific means of affirmative procurement of recycled and reusable “environmentally preferable” material. This EO stresses the hierarchy of environmental protection: source reduction, recycling, treatment and disposal.

f. EO 13148, Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management, establishes performance standards in environmental management, environmental compliance and the public’s right-to-know. A goal of the EO is to achieve significant reductions in toxic chemicals, hazardous substances and other pollutants utilizing source reduction as the single most important means of pollution prevention. These reductions may be accomplished by proven substitutes and established facility management practices. Other key agency requirements include:

- (1) Facility environmental audits,
- (2) Specific reduction goals,
- (3) Planning and accountability,
- (4) Environmental management and leadership,
- (5) Additional EPCRA reporting requirements, and
- (6) Acquisition and procurement.

g. VHA Directive 98-011, Management of Hazardous Chemicals, provides policy and procedures to ensure that hazardous chemicals are used, stored, handled and disposed of in accordance with accepted environmental standards. The Directive further requires employee training, record keeping, and minimization of hazardous chemicals and/or waste at VHA health care facilities.

h. VHA Directive 99-011, Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know (EPCRA) Program, provides information and policy for implementing EPCRA programs in VHA health care facilities. Key provisions of this Directive include participation with the local emergency planning committees and reporting quantities of hazardous chemicals and wastes.

i. VHA Directive 99-037, Waste Minimization and Compliance Report (RCN 10-00-904), provides the format for reporting data on waste categories, volume, environmental compliance, recycling and waste minimization initiatives.

j. Under Secretary for Health Memorandum, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Section 6002, Environmental Goals, establishes specific environmental goals for VHA in waste prevention, recycling and acquisition of recovered materials in VHA for target years 2000, 2005, and 2010.

3. POLICY: It is the policy of VHA to fully comply with the Pollution Prevention Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act, EO 13101, EO 13148 and other applicable state and local environmental regulations, while continuing to provide high quality health care to our Nation's veterans.

NOTE: Additional policy and guidance on performance and position description requirements for senior management, environmental compliance audits and (Chlorofluorocarbon) CFC reductions as required by EO 13148 will be provided separately.

4. ACTION

a. Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Directors must ensure that each health care facility:

(1) Develops a facility specific P2 plan to be reviewed annually and to include, as a minimum; a statement of management commitment to P2, a listing of measurable goals for hazardous waste reduction, procurement of recycled products and recycling and budgetary requirements for implementation.

(2) Reduces toxic and hazardous chemical releases and off site transfer by 10 percent annually between calendar years 2001 and 2006.

(3) Implements P2 into all phases of the acquisition and procurement processes, as well as the management operations of the facility by:

(a) Purchasing environmentally preferable products when possible. Environmentally preferable products include, but are not limited to, products that can be reprocessed and revised, products that have recycled content; can be recycled after use; are less toxic or hazardous and can be substituted for existing more toxic or hazardous products; are energy efficient or otherwise protect the environment.

(b) Developing facility guidance, policies, and operating procedures to implement pollution prevention into all aspects of facility operations, but with emphasis on those elements that involve toxic or hazardous substances.

(4) Implements source reduction measures including, but not limited to, the substitution of materials that are less hazardous and/or toxic to the maximum extent feasible.

(5) Promotes pollution prevention through employee training, outreach and awareness programs.

(6) Includes environmental costs in life-cycle and other cost estimating done in conjunction with the acquisition of goods and services.

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b. The Chief Facilities Management Officer (18) is responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that P2 data reporting requirements are incorporated into report RCN 10-99-904, as needed.

(2) Incorporating P2 and applicable requirements of EO 13148 into the Office of Facilities Management (18) guidance, practices, procedures, standards and specifications, e.g., environmentally and economically beneficial landscaping, environmentally preferable products and life-cycle costing.

(3) Conducting an agency-level environmental management system review that emphasizes pollution prevention as it relates to the Code of Environmental Management Principles for Federal Agencies developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (61 Federal Register 54062), and/or another appropriate environmental management system framework.

(4) Developing and administering a VHA-wide P2 awards program for innovative programs and outstanding environmental leadership.

(5) Encouraging, reviewing, and supporting the development of pilot projects for P2 and waste reduction.

(6) Determining if there are national trends requiring redress.

(7) Providing for periodic review and follow up with the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health (10N).

(8) Developing recommendations for correction to the Under Secretary for Health.

5. REFERENCES

a. Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, Public Law (Pub. L.) 101-453.

b. Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act of 1986, Pub. L. 99-499, The Superfund Amendments and Re-authorization Act of 1986, Sections 302-304 and 311-313.

c. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, Pub. L. 94-580.

d. EO 13101, Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition, dated September 4, 1998.

e. EO 13148, Greening the Government through Leadership in Environmental Management, dated April 21, 2000.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Environmental Programs Service (181C), is responsible for the content of this Directive.

7. RESCISSION: This VHA Directive expires June 30, 2006.

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Under Secretary for Health

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