Taking Control

Environmental Management Systems

The Army's worldwide commitments require installations to provide quality facilities, realistic training areas and a safe environment for Soldiers, their Families and the civilian work force. Simultaneously, community development, environmental regulations and rising energy costs continue to challenge operations. Well-implemented environmental management systems (EMSs) enables installations to meet requirements both now and in the future.

Managing the Environment for Sustainability

An EMS applies a methodical approach to identifying risks, focusing resources, measuring performance and meeting mission requirements.

Through an EMS, an installation can manage the full scope of its environmental programs. Many installations integrate strategic sustainability efforts with their EMS.

This ability to incorporate diverse initiatives into one encompassing system, along with the information power it provides, enables garrison commanders to meet their responsibilities to strengthen Soldier and Family readiness, enhance installation sustainability, improve infrastructure and enable business transformation.

Army installations already have mature environmental programs meeting most EMS requirements. Army policy requires each installation's EMS to focus on mission requirements, be broad in scope and conform to the ISO 14001 standard for EMS by Dec. 31, 2009.

ISO 14001

ISO 14001 is the globally recognized standard for environmental management systems published by the International Organization for Standardization. It provides a proven, systematic approach to managing the environmental risks associated with an organization's activities, products and services. ISO 14001 offers flexibility, allowing the organization to pursue its own performance goals as long as they are consistant with its environmental policy. Organizations commit to continuous improvement, prevention of pollution and compliance with legal requirements.

For More Information
Visit the Army EMS Web site at
http://aec.army.mil/usaec/sustainability/ems00.html
Visit the EPAS Web site at
http://aec.army.mil/usaec/compliance/epas-program00.html

PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT

An EMS relies on a cycle of continuous improvement consisting of four steps – Plan, Do, Check and Act. This model serves as a framework for installations to clearly identify, prioritize, manage, and check progress toward meeting environmental objectives and targets, minimize environmental risks, and continually improve mission support and environmental performance.

PLAN:

Establish the system processes and set objectives and develop programs necessary to deliver results in accordance with the installation's environmental or sustainability policy.
For example:

"Set objectives targets and programs to increase availability of training lands."

"Review the environmental aspects of the installations activities, products, and services."

DO:

Implement the system processes through defined roles and responsibilities, systematic communication, training and documented controls, including:

"Procedures in place to ensure current shop operational controls are in place at the point of use."

"Cross-functional teams guide work toward EMS/sustainability objective or goal."

CHECK:

Monitor and measure results by periodically checking compliance, auditing the system, and ensuring effectiveness of corrective and preventive actions, such as:

"The installation maintains its Installation Corrective Action Plan to ensure the effectiveness of corrective and preventive actions."

"Environmental officers and environmental inspectors evaluate compliance and ensure effective communication."

ACT:

Take action to continually improve the performance of the EMS. For instance:

"The Environmental Quality Control Committee guides the EMS and ensures its continued suitability, adequacy and effectiveness."

EMS and the Environmental Performance Assessment System

EMS uses the Environmental Performance Assessment System (EPAS) program to provide external audits and support internal audits that help Army commanders attain, sustain and monitor compliance with federal, state and local environmental laws and regulations, and DoD and Army requirements. EPAS now provides the external check on an installation's EMS that enables continuous improvement of the management system.