MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (INSTALLATIONS

LOGISTICS AND ENVIRONMENT)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (INSTALLATIONS

AND ENVIRONMENT)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER

RESERVE AFFAIRS, INSTALLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT)

DIRECTOR, DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY (D)

SUBJECT: Removal of Vinyl Asbestos Tile (VAT)

This is to express my concerns about possible unnecessary and

expensive removal of vinyl asbestos tile (VAT) floor covering on

Department of Defense (DoD) installations.

We have learned that extensive VAT removal projects have been

accomplished, are being considered, or are underway in the DoD

Components. In many cases the removal decision appears to be

based upon the simple presence of VAT and the subsequent

perception of a health hazard.

Neither the Occupational Safety and Health Administration nor

the Environmental Protection Agency prohibit the use of VAT.

Neither requires removal. DoD policy does not specify removal,

but does require the assessment of potential health hazards and

the exercise of professional judgment in the assignment of

priorities for abatement actions (Reference: DoD Instruction

6055.5). With regard to transfer of DoD facilities under base

closure and realignment, DoD policy is to manage potential VAT

health hazards in place.

There are cases where flooring must be removed for

maintenance or refurbishment. In general, with a few basic

precautions, tiles may be removed safely and inexpensively.

Early contact in planning such work with occupational health

professionals could save considerable, unnecessary costs when

risk assessments are accomplished.

Please ensure that risk assessments are an integral part of

any proposed VAT removal projects in your Component. If we can

provide any additional information, please have your staff

contact George Siebert at 703-604-5680.

Sherri W. Goodman

Deputy Under Secretary of Defense

(Environmental Security)