

**NOMINATION FOR
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD**

Category: **Environmental Quality -- Installation**

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Introduction:

Defense Supply Center Richmond (DSCR), located along the I-95 corridor in southern Chesterfield County, Virginia, has been a consistent, dependable supplier of quality goods and services to those defending freedom around the world since it was activated in 1942.

Designated as the lead center for aviation within the Defense Logistics Agency, the center serves within the Department of Defense (DoD) supply chain as the primary source of supply for the nearly 850,000 repair parts and operating supply items.

While these items and parts have an extremely wide range of applications, our core mission is to supply products with a direct application to aviation. These items include a mix of military-unique items supporting over 1,300 major weapons systems and other items readily available in the commercial market.

With over 600 acres and approximately 120 warehousing, utility and administrative buildings totaling over 6.7 million square feet, DSCR is host for a number of other DoD, Federal and state organizations. The largest of these tenants are the 350-acre Defense Distribution Depot Richmond, Virginia; the Defense Distribution Mapping Activity; the Virginia Army National Guard vehicle maintenance activity; and the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office.

The center and its tenant activities employ nearly 3,000 civilians, Service members, and contractor personnel, whose mission is to provide critical material support across the DoD and other Federal agencies, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

DSCR is located at the junction of the Tidewater and Piedmont Physiographic Regions in Virginia and is approximately one mile west of the James River, which has a drainage area of greater than 8,700 square miles at the fall line of Kingsland Creek.

Background

Good relationships with host or "gateway" communities are essential for the long-term viability of the national environmental, and local installations' mission. The rationale is simple: if we do not understand the priorities of our host communities and other stakeholders, we cannot plan and/or execute mission activities to address them.

Federal facilities are often located in areas where the local government support structures can not adequately comprehend, appreciate, and/or meet the high resource and mission demands of the installation. Multiple and varying priorities, communication challenges, land use encroachment, water and air quality issues, and natural resource impacts are increasingly becoming a source of contention between the federal facility and the communities and local governments surrounding them.

There is evidence that Environmental Management Systems (EMS) can help provide the structure needed by the Federal facility and its community to jointly address these environmentally related challenges. One of the most commonly recognized benefits of an EMS has been the positive interplay between stakeholders and the local governments. Through actual hands-on involvement by stakeholders in the EMS development process, involved parties have been shown to achieve an increased level of confidence and accomplishments related to overall management, compliance with regulatory drivers, and enhanced mission performance, by all parties.

Through an effective and innovative process, DSCR actively solicited, considered, and integrated the concerns of its stakeholders in building its ongoing and successful EMS. In this initial phase, these stakeholders included the City of Richmond, Virginia, Chesterfield County, Virginia, the host county in which DSCR resides, and Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality, the Commonwealth's environmental regulatory agency.

The Virginia Regional Environmental Management System (V-REMS) was an innovative nine-month pilot program designed to coordinate environmental assessments and subsequent management programs, conducted by a federal facility, two local governments, and their corresponding state environmental agency. The first program of its kind in the nation, it began in March 2003 and is currently going into its second phase.

V-REMS joins all levels of government to participate in coordinated activities to implement an EMS for each entity and to team together. With an EMS in place, program partners have identified and begun to successfully manage their individual and joint environmental responsibilities and work together to prevent new environmental security risks. Working together, these organizations significantly strengthened their lines of communication with each other and with their stakeholders. Partners also identified stakeholder priority issues such as water, waste, air quality, natural resource impacts, encroachment, and growth.

By sharing EMS best practices and lessons learned throughout the program, public sector organizations and host community stakeholders strengthened relationships and encouraged beneficial interactive dialogue. The program also established and measured objectives and targets consistent with stakeholder and organizational priorities. In addition, program partners shared tools, materials, and keys to success in their EMS implementation efforts.

The program was also designed to become replicable in regions around the nation and with other military installations. Information gathered during this project has been made available for use by other federal facilities, state and local agencies and their stakeholders.

Implementation:

DSCR and the Commonwealth of Virginia made initial contacts with proposed partners and developed a conceptual framework for an EMS regional approach for improving stakeholder relationships. Joint and focused processes were used to identify the individual and joint drivers behind this initiative. These were determined by the group to be:

- Improved relationships with neighbors, the surrounding community, and counteracting negative press
- Having cities/counties/states/federal agencies recognized as environmental leaders and innovators
- Management confidence in each respective environmental program
- Going beyond compliance assurance with applicable regulations
- Remaining competitive with private industry or privatized operations
- Organizational factors (i.e., better mission efficiency, worker health and safety concerns, employee morale, and reduced costs)
- Ability to leverage resources, opportunities, and solutions
- Ability to build consensus and provide consistent approaches and solutions to individual and joint environmental challenges
- Ability to use a virtual network for document sharing and communication among all partners
- Opportunity for face-to-face interaction between partners and stakeholders
- Partners shared common environmental resources (i.e., James River, Chesapeake Bay Watershed, transportation segments, etc.)
- Partnership allowed for future regulatory thinking as how to approach other state and/or regional organizations.

Throughout the V-REMS program, partners used an EMS approach to (1) identify a common list of stakeholders and understand different levels of communication; (2) establish communication objectives and measurable targets and develop materials to accomplish their project objectives; (3) accept a variety of roles and responsibilities in communicating with stakeholders; and (4) monitor progress, document and communicate to the partnering organizations, project sponsors and other interested public entities in the State and nationwide.

Specifically,

- An initial scoping meeting was held, followed by quarterly meetings at different partner locations.
- Teleconferences were held monthly to review all agreed upon EMS initiatives, identify barriers, plan outreach activities, review reports and discuss issues and progress from each partner and how to leverage activities.
- An electronic mailing list was maintained for V-REMS partners and other interested parties to receive updated materials and data regarding V-REMS initiative. The mailing list also provided information on scheduling conference calls, disseminating meeting agendas and minutes, establishing a calendar of outreach opportunities (meetings, conferences, etc.), and for reviewing outreach presentations, press releases and other communication materials.
- A password protected Virtual Private Office (VPO), Intranet site was established to facilitate information exchange, EMS document sharing and lessons learned, and to assist in joint preparation of press releases and outreach presentations.
- As the program matured, performance indicators were developed and clarified and a measurement tool, the V-REMS Performance Indicator Worksheet, was developed to track results.
- Partners jointly prepared and delivered numerous presentations at meetings around the State and at other national fora.
- Partners promoted the inclusion of additional V-REMS partners among neighboring public entities and federal facilities.
- Each partner provided regular briefings and updates to ensure that their managers were aware and supportive of the project.
- Partners prepared press releases, fact sheets, and a final report to promote understanding of the benefits and replicability of the V-REMS program.

Goals:

The next step was to identify the goals that this DSCR-led group wished to accomplish. These were determined to be:

- Determine if a multi-jurisdictional partnership (Federal, state, county, city public entities) could use the EMS process to positively affect stakeholder relationships and environmental performance.
- Determine if the model used in the V-REMS program could be replicated, and under what conditions.
- Determine if the return on the investment was valuable.

Accomplishments:

The V-REMS partnership has been a successful project with eager participants and interest from other governmental and community groups to join. It is the first partnership of its kind in the nation where Federal, state, and local governments partnered to work together on improving the environment in their respective communities and in their region using EMS.

One of the greatest benefits of this partnership was that partners accomplished their goal of developing better relationships with their stakeholders. This led to immediate, and certainly long-term improvements, in the ability to address environmental concerns.

Partners' specific environmental highlights from EMS implementation include:

- Reduced fleet size by 33 vehicles (including 19 Sport Utility Vehicles)
- Reduced vehicle miles traveled by 456,399 miles
- Bought 10 energy efficient vehicles (DSCR)
- Reduced water usage by 15 percent
- Reduced fuel usage and air emissions from vehicles (DSCR)
- Reduced sulfur emissions from heating boilers from 100 tons to seven tons (DSCR)
- Set up underground storage tanks (UST) and above-ground storage tanks (AST) database on GIS system for site identification (DSCR)
- Removed two, 1,000 gallon UST and installed one, 500 gallon AST
- Installed two oil/water separators to catch runoff
- Switched to environmentally friendly parts washer (DSCR)
- Installed secure containment area for batteries
- Labeled storm drains (DSCR)
- Reduced mercury products
- Recycled fluorescent tubes
- Purchased environmentally-friendly "green tip" tubes

Partners' outreach activities include:

- Attended the Virginia Air/Water/Waste Board Meeting to present V-REMS.
- Attended the DoD Colloquium with Environmental Protection Agency Region 3 states to present V-REMS.
- Attended the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) meeting to present V-REMS.

- Spoke at the Chesterfield P2 Awards ceremony.
- Asked by the Federal Environmental Executive's office and Environmental Council of States (ECOS) to participate on a program to promote coordination between state and federal agencies conducting EMS activities.
- Asked to participate in ECOS national symposium in Washington, DC.

Conclusion:

A DSCR-organized and led project, the Virginia Regional EMS has clearly demonstrated the value of good communication as a tool to build mutual understanding and trust, and for transforming sometimes strained community-facility relationships into productive, mission-supporting, and environmentally beneficial partnerships. Data and results obtained to date have shown that the three identified goals have been clearly met and will continue to be strengthened.

This governmental/stakeholder partnership generated a huge amount of energy, synergy among partners, and motivation to move ahead on specific environmental and stakeholder challenges at a pace that exceeded individual expectations. There was greater visioning power – what the EMS partners' process could accomplish through Federal, state, county and local synergy – than any individual partner could conceive on their own. There was a realization that the return on the investment through leveraging was powerful.

This type of EMS and the V-REMS partnership, not only helps ensure that DSCR remains in compliance with all applicable environmental and safety regulatory requirements, while performing the mission as effectively and efficiently as possible.

There was also enthusiasm and encouragement that real environmental benefits could result through the EMS process. Early warning signs of issues could be more readily detected and responded to before they became critical issues and caused negative stakeholder impacts. Specific regulatory actions (e.g., permitting) were identified early on in the process and each partner could better define its role in time-critical and sensitive issues and processes that needed to be established over the long term.

Regular and frequent communication was critical to the success of this program. It promoted better understanding, familiarity, and trust in a short period of time. As the partners acknowledged each other's activities there were more opportunities to exchange knowledge, status, lessons learned, and keys to success. There was commitment to maintain and strengthen existing relationships and expand participants in the dialogue on a frequent and regular basis through the next phases of EMS activities.

The partners of this EMS initiative will continue their outreach efforts to broadcast the success of the V-REMS program, to assure adequate balance of what is happening in each organization environmentally, and to describe and disseminate information about how efforts are affecting environmental improvement and strong management in the region. V-REMS will continue to be a vehicle for increased interaction with the media through regular presentations at EMS information sessions, environmental fairs, departmental briefings, regulatory and citizen boards, and regional, state, and national meetings.

This initiative has shown that a multi-jurisdictional partnership (federal, state, county, city public entities) could use the EMS process to positively affect stakeholder relationships and environmental and mission performance. The process followed by DSCR and its partners could be replicated at other federal and/or DoD facilities and with other types and groups of stakeholders. The time and dollars invested was far exceeded by the short and long term positive returns.