

## Narrative Summary

### USNH Yokosuka

#### INTRODUCTION

U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka comprises one 48-bed military treatment facility (MTF) and seven branch health clinics located on mainland Japan, Korea, and Diego Garcia. The command's mission statement is as follows:

"Forward deployed to provide medical, operational and contingency support for active duty, family members and other eligible beneficiaries in Japan, Korea and Diego Garcia. Staff members deploy in direct support of the overseas contingency operations and humanitarian assistance missions."

As the largest MTF on mainland Japan's Honshu Island, USNH Yokosuka, and its over 1,200 staff (863 active duty and 358 U.S. Civil Service, Japanese nationals, contractors and volunteers), provides care to over 42,000 active duty personnel and their family members, retirees and their family members, and other eligible beneficiaries. This same staff provides operational medical support to commands that fall under Commander, Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ); Commander, Naval Forces Korea (CNFK); and Commander, Seventh Fleet (C7F). In order to serve this population, USNH Yokosuka has the following facilities:

- USNH Yokosuka located on Fleet Activities, Yokosuka
- Branch clinics located on Navy or U.S. Marine Corps bases in Japan, Korea, and Diego Garcia, including:
  - o Atsugi, Japan
  - o Mount Fuji, Japan
  - o Iwakuni, Japan
  - o Sasebo Japan (2 clinics)
  - o Chinhae, Korea
  - o Diego Garcia

Additionally, USNH Yokosuka provides 100% of the medical waste management and support to three U.S. Army veterinary clinics at Yokosuka, Sasebo, and Iwakuni, Japan (enclosure (7), photo 5), as well as numerous Fleet and Fleet Marine Force commands.

Historically, USNH Yokosuka's core MTF is located on approximately 50 acres where the original Imperial Japanese Navy hospital was built in 1881. Since this time multiple Japanese and U.S. hospitals have been rebuilt at this location. The current USNH Yokosuka was commissioned in 1982 and provides medical, dental, and surgical care through numerous outpatient clinics, inpatient wards and same-day surgery services.

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In order to meet necessary environmental compliance standards for the variety of missions and commands that fall under the cognizance of the USNH Yokosuka enterprise, the command's environmental compliance office is well versed in both U.S. and Department of Defense laws, regulations, and policies, as well as international host country standards.

USNH Yokosuka is accredited as a hospital system through the Joint Commission (U.S. hospital accrediting organization) and falls under the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's Inspector General (MEDIG) oversight program. Both the Joint Commission and the MEDIG inspected USNH Yokosuka in August 2014 and extended USNH Yokosuka's accreditation until 2017.

### **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

#### **Environmental Management System (EMS)**

USNH Yokosuka is a leader in environmental protection, with over 20 separate programs under management, including major programs in EMS, hazardous materials (HAZMAT) management, hazardous waste management, and medical waste management. The EMS program is operated by the command's single environmental programs manager and one hazardous and medical waste operations manager. Organizationally, this program falls within the command's facility department.

The command's exceptional environmental compliance across its area of responsibility is predicated on a strong EMS that ensures compliance, while encouraging simultaneous exploration and pursuit of operational cost-savings, resource protection, increased public safety, and untapped innovation, to enhance the Department of Defense's mission readiness.

Operationally, the EMS is successful due to the following factors:

- Organizational alignment of the EMS program under the Joint Commission-required Environment of Care Committee (EoCC). The EoCC is a cross-functional team that is responsible for compliance of all non-medical operations and reports directly to the command's governing body and the Commanding Officer. EoCC membership includes staff from facilities, safety, logistics, medical and dental services, and each branch clinic.
- Strong relationships with the numerous base commanders' environmental divisions, Navy Facilities Command (Far East), and CNFJ, CNFK, and C7F points of contact.

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- Effective relationships with host nation countries in the areas of medical and dental practice, emergency management, and environmental oversight.
- Highly scalable compliance programs and business practices as USNH Yokosuka's branch clinics range in staff size from 7 to over 100.
- Cross-functional collaboration. Collaborating through the EoCC, the environmental office develops objective target metrics for select stakeholders to include data collection and detailed reports that are EoCC approved and routed through the command's governing body to the Commanding Officer. Specific goals achieved in FY 2014 included:
  - o Reduced hazardous materials usage through the enterprise.
  - o Updated all safety data sheet (SDS) binders through the enterprise to reduce the size of the command's authorized users lists (AULs) (enclosure (7), photo 2).
  - o Designated the Safety Officer as the sole proprietor of the hazardous material program and exclusive authority for updating, maintaining, and accessing its custom-designed database, put in place to manage hazardous materials throughout USNH Yokosuka and its outlying branch clinics.
  - o Identified and monitored numerous EMS targets.
  - o Executed hazardous materials awareness campaign through a command-wide hazardous communication program (HAZCOM).
  - o Conducted command-wide inspections and training on proper hazardous materials management via the Industrial Hygiene department and Public Safety Office.
- Top down leadership engagement: The Commanding Officer established a command-wide policy on environmental stewardship and leveraging the command's ability to preserve and protect the environment. This policy set specific environmental protection goals.

**SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ASSOCIATED TECHNICAL MERIT AND  
ORIENTATION TO THE MISSION**

UNSH Yokosuka accomplished numerous environmental stewardship actions in 2014. Highlights include the following:

***Waste Reduction Efforts: Maintaining Permits and Compliance Records:***

In an effort to ensure compliance with all U.S. and Japan environmental regulations, laws and directives, USNH Yokosuka hired a hazardous and medical waste operations manager who is singularly responsible for managing all medical and hazardous waste. This hire has significantly reduced unnecessary

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variation in waste management practices, improved program controls, and made hazardous and waste management disposal safe for all staff. Further, the manager has visited the command's Japanese waste disposal contractor to ensure compliance with all requirements outlined within the Japanese Environmental Governing Standards (JEGS). Such visits ensure a better understanding of the disposal contractor's operational requirements, capabilities, and contingency plans should their incinerator fail. These proactive efforts help ensure long-term bi-lateral partnerships are developed and foster a more compliant and efficient business relationship.

Following a 2013 external audit on environmental matters, USNH Yokosuka implemented an extremely successful process for accumulating, processing, and disposing of medical waste - led by the command's new hazardous and medical waste operations manager. Notably, this process,

- Implemented an aggressive enterprise-wide staff training program alerting personnel on how to differentiate between infections and non-infectious waste and regular trash - each with their own cost per pound disposal rate.
- Saved 5% in the disposal cost for the command's \$80,000 infectious waste program and 3% overall for the combined \$103,000 infectious and non-infectious waste programs. The EoCC fully expects more than a 15% reduction of medical waste in FY 2015.
- Established a new bilingual (English and Japanese) labeling system for all infectious waste bags to ensure awareness and compliance by both English and Japanese speaking staff (enclosure (7), photo 7).
- Developed and implemented a medical waste tracking system to document medical waste generation by weight, department, and month. Accurate tracking ensures precise generation rates, sets internal process controls in place, and permits trend analysis and verification of contractor data for future medical waste contract bidding.

***Pharmaceutical Hazardous Waste Efforts and Accomplishments***

Following 6 months of planning with Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, USNH Yokosuka established a hazardous waste accumulation point within its pharmacy for collection of all pharmaceuticals deemed hazardous (enclosure (7), photo 3). Disposal occurs at Fleet Activities, Yokosuka's hazardous waste disposal site.

This effort, which began in July 2014, has standardized the pharmaceutical disposal process to ensure environmental compliance and patient and staff safety. Notably, both the

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Joint Commission and MEDIG found this practice to be a "best practice".

***Qualified Recycling Program (QRP)***

USNH Yokosuka has taken an active role in Fleet Activities, Yokosuka's QRP program that collects scrap metal, cooking grease (from USNH Yokosuka's galley), cardboard, and white paper. Further, under the auspices of the QRP, the environmental compliance office, in coordination with facilities and medical staff, received \$10,000 in funding to purchase additional hazardous materials (HAZMAT) storage lockers, with an expectation of \$40,000 in FY 2015. Such lockers, stationed at the departmental level within the command, safely secure the numerous HAZMAT agents that exist within any hospital.

***Environmental Awareness Programs***

Critical to the success of any program is education and awareness. To ensure all USNH Yokosuka staff are educated on the numerous environmental stewardship programs within the command, all newly reporting personnel receive a mandatory environmental program brief at orientation (enclosure (7), photo 1). This brief provides an overview of the command's HAZMAT spill response guide and hazardous waste program, education on the command's policies relating to hazardous waste transportation and disposal, and the medical waste program.

In addition to initial orientation, the staff receives regular on-the-job, work-center specific training through the environmental compliance office.

***Analyzing Construction Projects for Environmental Concerns***

USNH Yokosuka reviews all hospital projects for environmental concerns, particularly important since the main hospital was built in 1982 and two detached facilities were built in the 1920's and 1930's. Given the age of the buildings, and the associated known construction materials that contain lead based paint and asbestos, all facility maintenance personnel are trained annually on non-friable asbestos removal. Because of this training, hazardous materials are properly packaged and managed until transported and deposited in Fleet Activities, Yokosuka's hazardous waste storage area. Further, USNH Yokosuka also established productive collaborations with Fleet Activities, Yokosuka's environmental office to ensure efficient maintenance and ongoing environmental protection.

***Reducing Spill Risk***

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USNH Yokosuka has modified its processes to significantly reduce the potential of a HAZMAT spill risk within the hospital. This is of critical importance since the laboratory stores large amounts of formalin (a known carcinogen). Importantly, the command has banned the use of five-gallon storage containers throughout the hospital, replacing each with less risky one-gallon storage containers.

If a spill does occur, USNH Yokosuka staff is trained to handle spills under 250 ml. For spills over 250 ml, USNH Yokosuka has collaborated with CNFJ's Regional Fire Department to handle these spills as the fire department can safely handle using self-contained breathing apparatus' (enclosure (7), photo 4).

***C7F Collaboration***

Fleet Activities, Yokosuka is homeport to the Navy's only forward-deployed nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, USS George Washington (CVN-73), and the majority of her strike group. As such, there is significant medical waste generated from the strike group's ships and USNH Yokosuka has been instrumental in processing their medical waste and providing programmatic oversight. Doing so ensures environmental procedures and protective measures are in place for medical waste, adding to the ships' operational readiness (enclosure (7), photo 6).

**TRANSFERABILITY**

Each of the accomplishments listed in this narrative can be easily transferrable to any facility who is a steward of environmental resources and deals with hazardous materials. However, for any facility to perform at the level of USNH Yokosuka two criteria are critical. First, top-down leadership and set expectations are a must, as seen at USNH Yokosuka with the Commanding Officer's environmental policy and stated goals. Second, cross-functional teams, as demonstrated by USNH Yokosuka's EoCC significantly increase the opportunity to ensure successful implementation.

**STAKEHOLDER INTERACTION**

USNH Yokosuka has numerous stakeholders within the environmental compliance area: Navy, Army, U.S. Marine Corps, Government of Japan, Japanese business contractors, base commanders' environmental and facility offices, staff and patients. As noted in the multiple accomplishments listed above, each one of these stakeholders has been involved in a variety of ways to

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ensure success. Without the stakeholders, success is not possible.

**IMPACT/OUTCOMES**

The sustainability of the programs that USNH Yokosuka has developed is very high for several reasons. First, the appropriate resources have been spent in order to institutionalize the described program management framework. Specifically, policies, processes, and systems are in place and dedicated subject matter experts have been hired. Second, procedures developed are derived from best practices that, while they may evolve over time, are based on fundamental requirements approved by either higher authority or regulatory requirements, including the Joint Commission. Third, new ideas to improve environmental stewardship, whether for the laboratory, building construction, or environmental awareness, will continue to be fostered and grown from the staff across the command who are part of a cross-functional approach to the entire environment of care. Having such new ideas will negate complacency to move forward while ensuring safe healthcare delivery.