

Directorate of Public Works-Environmental

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Environmental team and DMWR make Hood pools safer

By Christine Luciano

When summer time comes around, nothing refreshes on a hot day in Texas like a dip in the pool. Cooling off in one of Fort Hood's nine pools is safer thanks to the new innovations the Pollution Prevention (P2) Team and Directorate of Morale Welfare and Recreation (DMWR) are implementing to keep the pool water sanitized (or disinfected) and environment safer for pool operators and visitors.

In a pollution prevention opportunity assessment, Fort Hood's pools were identified as one the areas that used and stored chlorine gas. "The P2 Team routinely conducts pollution prevention assessments to identify areas that need improvement," said Jennifer Rawlings, Fort Hood P2 Coordinator. "We saw the pools as an opportunity to find an alternative product that would improve safety and the quality of life."

The 150 pound cylinders of chlorine gas used at each of the nine swimming pools for disinfection requires stringent maintenance and safety requirements to minimize accidents and protect workers in the chlorine storage areas. "When handling chlorine gas, we have to wear a respirator because there is a danger," said Steve Warren, DMWR Plumber. "But with the new system the primary advantage is taking away the danger from the pool operators, visitors, and surrounding areas as well as housing."

According to the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, inhaling pure or highly concentrated chlorine gas can cause severe damage to the lungs and other organs. "It is DPW's objective to remove potential hazards from highly occupied areas on Fort Hood, like the swimming pools, to ensure the safety of all people on the Installation," Rawlings said.



The new automated chlorine tablet system will be easier and safer to maintain. "In some instances if there are leaks with chlorine gas, it could be catastrophic," said Zach Lowy, Progressive Commercial Aquatics Service Technician. "But the chlorine tablets are not as toxic so there is less hazard and risk than operating with chlorine gas."

With the new system, a machine with an automated controller replaces the gas chlorine cylinders. The machine takes

the water from the pool and pushes it through the chlorine tablets in the tank above the machine and pumps it back into the pool. Low and high limits are set, so that the pool's chlorine level remains stable. To ensure the controller is accurate, pool operators will take pH and chlorine readings from the water to check the readings on the controller, and will recalibrate, if necessary.

“The P2 team and DMWR are taking initiative to remove hazardous chlorine gas from the swimming pools,” said Rawlings. “Improving safety and the quality of life for Soldiers, their families, and the Fort Hood community is a priority.”