

# Practice Hazardous Mat

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**H**azardous waste proliferation has become a serious Navy problem. Hazmat harms the environment, is unsafe and difficult to handle, and disposal is extremely expensive. You can be instrumental in helping the Navy solve the problem by recognizing its seriousness and taking immediate action within your command to minimize the generation of hazardous waste.

An effective hazardous-waste-minimization program must include active hazmat life-cycle management before the material turns into hazardous waste. One of the best and highest-payback ways of doing this is to establish a hazmat shelf-life-extension management program.

Some 70 percent of hazardous material turned in for disposal is unused and in original packaging: It simply reached the end of its designated shelf-life before being used. Your command can do a lot to help the Navy change that situation.

All shelf-life material is either Type I or Type II. While about 10 percent is Type I and cannot be extended, 90 percent, on the other hand, is Type II with an extendable life. Instead of automatically disposing of Type II material when its shelf-life expires, you should make every effort to extend its life until all the material is used.

Shelf-life extension programs are the single most neglected aspect of shelf-life management. Organizations (users and suppliers) generally do not conduct in-house inspections or tests to extend their material's shelf-life. They either don't extend shelf-life at all, or they rely on the monthly, DoD Quality Status Listing (QSL) to inform them what shelf-life material can be extended and for how long.

When the QSL is used, extension efforts often consist solely of re-marking material

with the new expiration dates. There is nothing wrong with that and it needs to be done. However, the QSL primarily lists only DLA-managed items requiring laboratory testing. Items requiring only visual checks are not listed, nor are GSA-managed items. There is a DoD initiative underway to extend the QSL



**Flammable Symbol**



**Environmental Danger**

# Material Shelf-life Management

into a DoD listing that will include material managed by DLA and all military services. But, it will be some time before that initiative is fully integrated, and it never will list items only requiring visual checks for extensions.

In-house inspections and tests are good enough for most of your material. However, it is often difficult for Sailors to find descriptions of specific inspections or tests required to extend the shelf-life of particular items,

and there is no single source of test information.

Individual product specifications are a primary source of inspection and test information. Also, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and Federal Standard 793 guidelines are other sources having guidance for tests to be conducted for extending a particular product's shelf-life. Shelf-life extension inspections and tests on hazardous material must rely on locally developed instructions and procedures. In the absence of specific guidelines, use old-fashioned common sense. Shelf-life extension tests for most Type II material are not complicated, do not require laboratory testing and can be done on the spot by your hazmat technician with NEC 9595 (usually your SK). The extension tests usually are nothing more than visual checks for damage or deterioration.

Further assistance with shelf-life questions and problems is available from Navy and regional shelf-life coordinators, available at the major CONUS homeports or bases to assist naval commands in their area. Overseas-based ships should contact their area or regional Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) representative for assistance in lengthening hazmat shelf-life. They can help with any aspect of shelf-life management. Their goal is to reduce hazardous waste disposals by increasing consumption of hazardous materials, and shelf-life assistance is a big part of that goal.

Shelf-life management also reduces disposal costs (which usually are higher than the cost of the product itself) and minimizes purchasing additional hazardous material to replace expired, but still useable, material. ☺

