



ACQUISITION
AND SUSTAINMENT

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

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MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP (SEE DISTRIBUTION)

SUBJECT: Interim Policy on Solid Waste Disposal Outside the United States

The Department of Defense (DoD) recognizes our duty to protect the health and safety of and minimize risk to our personnel at locations outside the United States (U.S.). Disposing of solid waste properly is one way to minimize risk of exposure to potential health hazards.

DoD Instruction (DoDI) 4715.19, "Use of Open-Air Burn Pits in Contingency Operations" provides DoD's policy and guidance for the use of open-air burn pits and prohibits the disposal of covered waste, except when no alternative disposal method is feasible.

To better protect U.S. personnel abroad, the Department is expanding the policy scope to all contingency locations and enduring installations outside the U.S. and refining the definition of open air burn pit as follows:

Open-air burn pit. An excavation or surface feature with berms used to dispose of solid waste by burning—in outdoor air at locations outside the United States. Open-air burn pits lack any stack or air pollution controls that would minimize inhalation risk of pollutants to personnel. This definition excludes sites where individuals are burning solid wastes generated by non-DoD sources (i.e., domestic household and/or yard waste burned by local population, for example burn barrels.)

The Department identified several areas where changes to policy and processes will reduce the risk of exposure to DoD personnel located outside of the U.S. due to solid waste disposal and open-air burn pits. For enduring installations outside the U.S., DoD Manual 4715.05 "Overseas Environmental Baseline Guidance Document" Vol. 1-5 remains the primary policy, augmented by the following. Effective immediately, it is policy that DoD shall:

- Dispose of solid wastes at locations outside of the U.S. in a manner that minimizes risk to U.S. personnel by using incinerators, modern engineered landfills, logistics capacity contracts, and/or other accepted solid waste management practices. Planning for all new locations outside of the U.S. will identify these solid waste disposal capabilities.
- Prohibit open-air burn pit disposal of all waste generated by U.S. forces located outside of the U.S., except when the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) grants an exemption requested by a Combatant Commander (CCDR), who must first determine that no alternative disposal method is feasible. This prohibition covers all types of disposal and uses of open burn pits, whether operated or used by U.S. forces, contractors, multinational forces, or allied country forces.

- The Military Departments will provide training to and equipment for U.S. personnel on appropriate waste management practices. All contracts (i.e., Logistics Capacity, local contracts, etc.) will be modified as appropriate to use terms and ensure the use of appropriate waste management equipment to dispose of solid waste.

CCDR open-air pit burn exemption requests must address the circumstances, reasoning, and methodology supporting the non-feasibility determination and include a Health Risk Assessment as prescribed by Appendix 3A of the current DoDI 4715.19. CCDRs may only request an exemption for up to 180 days.

If SecDef grants an exemption for the temporary use of an open-air burn pit, location commanders will manage the open-air burn pit in a manner that minimizes risks to the health and safety of U.S. personnel.

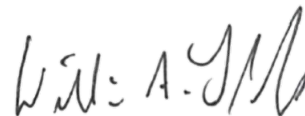
- The open-air burn pit will be sited at least 2,000 meters from any living, dining, or work areas, and be downwind of the prevailing wind direction. The siting must be coordinated with the requisite security, safety, and appropriate medical authorities, and when practicable, local or host nation medical or civilian authorities.
- The operational commander will report monthly the location, number of U.S. personnel affected, and distance to personnel of the open-air burn pit through the CCDR to Joint Staff (J-4).
- The Lead Service Component will have qualified occupational and environmental health personnel conduct air sampling on a periodic basis (not less than quarterly) at bases located within 2,000 meters of any DoD or non-DoD open-air burn pits. Samples will be collected on the base camps to evaluate potential exposures and conduct a health risk assessments for DoD personnel. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations and Environment will issue guidance on timing and content of reporting sampling results.
- Operational commanders will identify any DoD or non-DoD open-air burn pits up to 4,000 meters from a U.S. personnel living, dining, or work area and will report that location to the CCDR so that the Joint Staff can include the location on a watch list. The information will be provided to the Lead Service Component to evaluate data in and around those areas, including wind pattern studies and air, soil, or groundwater samples, to evaluate the effect of the burn pit on those surrounding areas. The Military Departments will track this information for determining any potential future health concerns.

To ensure elimination of burn pits, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition & Sustainment) will commit to developing technology alternatives and the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), through the Program Executive Officer, Combat Support and Combat Service Support, will ensure such alternatives are available for rapid acquisition and fielding..

To codify the policy changes above, I am establishing a DoD working group to update DoDI 4715.19 and support the Department's deployment of waste reduction and removal strategies during operations outside the U.S. that protect our warfighters. Specifically, the working group will focus on the following key areas to eliminate all waste burning requirements outside the U.S.:

- Feasible alternatives to open-air burn pits to dispose of waste
- Policy development and implementation
- Funding requirements
- Planning and training requirements

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy, Installations, and Environment will chair the working group, which will be composed of Assistant Secretary-level Military Department counterparts; as well as, similar representatives from the J-4, the Combatant Commanders, and the Defense Logistics Agency. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans and Capabilities; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness; the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering; and the DoD Office of General Counsel may support the working group, as necessary. The working group may also be augmented by detailees and subject matter experts from across the Department.



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