

Fort Hood community helps divert waste and recycles with more than 3000 pounds in one day
By Christine Luciano

It's summer. . . time for all things green, time for cleaning house and getting rid of unwanted waste. This summer, the Directorate of Public Works Environmental Division, Fort Hood Recycle Center and Fort Hood Family Housing remind you to think green by safely disposing of unwanted household hazardous waste, like oil-based paint, pesticides, and batteries. Don't forget electronic waste and bulk recycle items such as computers, game systems, washers, and dryers.

The DPW Environmental Division, and Fort Hood Recycle Center and FHFH hosted a household hazardous waste and bulk recycle collection event at the Kouma and the Comanche Community Center. Fort Hood residents, Soldiers, and Department of Defense personnel properly got rid of their tires, paints, household cleaners, used-oil, and computers.

Lt. Col. James Raymer, 1st Cavalry Division, came out to the Kouma Community Center and dropped off his electronics and metal products. "It was easy. I loaded everything into my car and brought it down here," Raymer said. "The solution is not to throw your electronics and hazardous products in the trash. Otherwise it ends up in the landfill and leaches out into our environment."

Staff Sgt. Michael Moore, 4th Infantry Division, a Fort Hood resident who lives in Comanche III came out to the Comanche Community Center with two boxes full of hazardous household products. "Disposing your household hazardous waste properly is the right thing to do," Moore said. "It protects our community, our environment, and our children."

Throwing these materials into the trash or pouring them down the drain or into the sewer will further contaminate the Belton Lake, pollute the environment, and pose a threat to human health as well as your pets'.

The Fort Hood community helped DPW Environmental divert truckloads of electronic waste and household hazardous products and more than 200 tires from ending up in the landfill. The Fort Hood Recycle Center collected approximately 3060 pounds of scrap metal and 200 pounds from tires with rims, undamaged batteries, and other recyclables from the Fort Hood community. An additional 300 tires were collected from the Warrior Way AAFES Tire Center.

"AAFES appreciates DPW Environmental coming out and picking up our tires," Irena Holmes, Warrior Way AAFES Tire Center Supervisor, said. "This was a great opportunity to take advantage of DPW Environmental's collection event, while avoiding tire disposal costs. The Environmental Division helps us find the proper places to dispose of everything from our hazardous materials to our recyclables and does a great job of making sure we continue on as environmental stewards."

The best way to get rid of household hazardous waste is to first, buy only what you need, then use it all. Take leftovers to the Fort Hood Classification Unit (CU) on North Avenue and 37th Street for proper disposal.

“The CU has a household hazardous materials reuse program that helps not only Soldiers, but also their families and contractors on Fort Hood to drop off or pick up household hazardous materials,” Randy Doyle, Pollution Prevention Program Manager said.

The CU accepts household hazardous items like paints; all detergents and cleaners; pesticides and herbicides; all batteries except vehicle batteries; aerosol cans; and used oil and filters.

If the household hazardous items can be reused, they are placed into a storage facility. Department of Defense personnel can see what is available and pick up paints, aerosol cans, and household cleaners for projects around the house.

“The CU’s services allow for hazardous materials to be collected and reissued for proper use, or disposed safely,” Doyle said. “These free services can save you money and time,”

Reduce your household hazardous waste by choosing products labeled “non-toxic” or using home-made, non-toxic alternatives for household cleaners, bleach, drain openers, mothballs and insecticides can go a long way toward eliminating toxic waste in your household.

Department of Defense personnel can also drop off their personal electronic waste to the CU. The CU accepts electronic items to include monitors, computer systems, keyboards, mice, power strips, game systems, cell phones and all other electronic ‘gadgets’ as well as low grade electronics such as battery backups, printers, fax machines, scanners, and copiers.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency more than 3.2 million tons of electronic waste ends up in landfills each year. At that rate, electronic waste is becoming one of the fastest growing waste streams in the country, the EPA claims.

When you need to clear out the broken washer and dryer in your garage or on your back porch, you can bring it to the Fort Hood Recycle Center. The recycle center not only accepts paper, plastic, ink cartridges, compact discs, and cardboard, but also recycles large metal products like washers, dryers, stoves, bicycles, and lawn mowers. In addition, the recycle center offers an incentive program for recycling aluminum cans. Residents, Soldiers, DoD personnel, and organizations can drop off their aluminum cans at the recycle center at building 4626 on 72nd Avenue and get paid \$.50 a pound.

“The Fort Hood Recycle Center and DPW Environmental are excellent resources and are here to help,” Raymer said. “They provide an easy way for you dispose of everything you have the right way.”

For more information about the CU’s services call 288-7627 and Fort Hood Recycle Center’s services call 287-2336.