



Norfolk medical mission provides criti

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When a Warfighter needs a bandage, where does it come from? How about a surgical gown, medical sponges or vaccines? DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., plays a vital role in ensuring the readiness of our nation's troops with the storage and distribution of these and other medical items under its newest mission, the expedited delivery of high-priority medical materiel.

Serving as a trans-shipment point where supplies are consolidated and shipped out to soldiers in the field, DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., now manages general medical/surgical supplies, X-ray machines, vaccines, and other types of pharmaceuticals.

DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., inherited its medical mission, operational since March 2010, from the Norfolk Intra-Fleet Supply Support Operations Team during the Navy Warehouse Transfer, which transfers Navy tactical distribution functions performed by Commander, Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers' regional FISCS to DLA. The original NWT agreement did not include the transfer of medical missions; however, the contract between Navy, DLA Troop Support, and the third party logistics company handling the mission was coming to an end



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and it was ultimately decided that the medical materiel transfer to DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., would be included, largely due to the fact that an in-sourced medical mission already existed within the organization.

Previously, DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., employed 25 contractors to handle nearly 39,000 general cargo and 3,600 special handling requisitions yearly. "This transfer has created multiple efficiencies. Most immediate, the Distribution Standard System has allowed us to eliminate many manual efforts and substitute contractors with five government employees and produce equal or better service," said DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., deputy commander Denise Cordeiro.

Although the transition has been successful, the transfer was the result of a lot of hard work and dedication by the Norfolk team.

Previously, the depot operated a scaled-down version of the facilities needed to handle this type of mission. Although all DLA Distribution's Navy and Continental United States sites have the capability to support medical cold chain management cross-docking, Norfolk took this to the next level in its ability to store these items for incoming ships, acquiring special handling materiel to support cold chain management. Where its facilities were previously very basic, Norfolk obtained a new freezer and security alarm systems to protect the mission, as no secure items had ever been

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stored on site. The freezer was tested to ensure it could run at the proper temperatures to condition the boxes and items to meet commercial requirements, as many pharmaceuticals being transferred required temperature controlled and value-added packaging.

Training of employees was also needed to ensure proper handling of the materiel, and DLA Distribution employee Scott Sheipe was on-site for training and customer assistance. "We needed to work through the normal challenges of any major function transfer," he said. "In this case, employees needed to understand how to properly store pharmaceuticals and establish those environments which are Food and Drug Administration compliant." The depot is only the second of DLA Distribution's 25 sites to receive Food and Drug Administration licensing to

move pharmaceuticals.

Since adopting the mission, DLA Distribution Norfolk, Va., has processed over 80,000 medical items, including general cargo, controlled drugs and cold-chain managed items.

"DLA Distribution Norfolk Virginia's goal is to perfect the medical process and expand medicinal support to the fleet, while achieving a 99 percent accuracy and efficiency rate to our customers," said Cordeiro.



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