

DDC's involvement in VPP aims to create safer work environment

By Jessica Walter, DDC Command Affairs

As part of a continuing commitment to protect the health and safety of the Defense Distribution Center's (DDC) workforce, five distribution centers are now involved in the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Challenge Process.

Administered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), organizations achieving recognition as a VPP site are acknowledged as having outstanding occupational safety and health management systems.

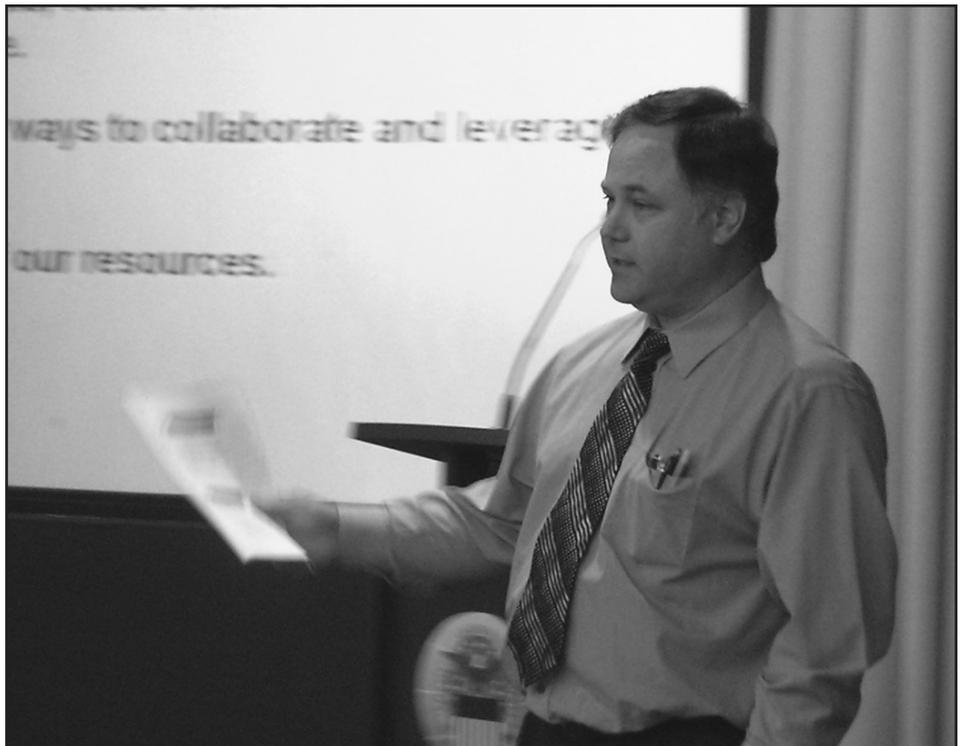
"The Challenge Process basically keeps a site on task toward achieving status as a VPP 'Star' site," explained DDC Safety Manager Dave Mack.

Companies and organizations involved in VPP since the program's inception in 1982 have seen dramatic reductions in workplace accidents that have resulted in improved productivity and a reduction in worker's compensation rates and other accident-related costs.

"VPP is a proven safety management system used at companies and organization all around the world to reduce accidents, increase employee morale and improve productivity," said Mack.

VPP is designed to protect the safety and health of employees through reinforcing management-level commitment and enhancing employee involvement, continual worksite analysis and self auditing, detailed hazard prevention and control, and quality safety and health training, said Mack.

According to Mack, workplace accidents cost DDC about \$20 million each year in direct compensation charges.



DDC Safety Manager Dave Mack spoke about DDC's involvement in the VPP at a recent DDC HQ Lunch & Learn session.

The benefits enjoyed by VPP involvement also assist DDC in reaching a 75 percent reduction in workplace accidents by the end of Fiscal Year 2008. The goal was set by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in 2004 using the Fiscal Year 2002 rate for accidents resulting in lost time as a baseline.

According to Mack, the Department of Defense lost more than 4.6 million hours of productive work time as a result of accidents from 2001 to 2003. "This is equivalent to losing 2,660 full time employees – that's about the size of our entire workforce at our largest site, DDSP [Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa.]."

Mack urges all employees to build safety awareness into each task. "Always be aware of your surroundings and report any hazards to your supervisor immediately," he said.

"This program is focused on preventing workplace accidents, and it requires a commitment from supervisors and employees alike," Mack added.

DDC sites currently involved in the VPP Challenge are Defense Distribution Depots Susquehanna, Pa. (DDSP); San Joaquin, Calif. (DDJC); Norfolk, Va. (DDNV); Oklahoma City, Okla. (DDOO); and Red River, Texas (DDRT).

According to Mack, the Challenge Process is a relatively new addition and formal participation is limited by OSHA. However, the methods and practices of the process will be shared across the organization as part of DDC's Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Management System, or ESOHMS, a consistent management approach to the Environmental and Safety programs implemented this year at all DDC sites.

This standardized approach ensures all DDC sites can perform the same level of performance as those actively participating in the VPP Challenge Process.

DDC's goal is to eventually involve all 26 of DDC's distribution sites around the world in VPP.