



# News Release

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## **ECBC Partners with JPM-Elimination for Personnel Decontamination Training Course**

*Mandatory training incorporates hands-on experience and classroom instruction*

**ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md.** – Trained equipment technicians and operators from the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) have developed a new Personnel Decontamination Station (PDS) training course in conjunction with the Joint Project Manager for Elimination (JPM-E). Personnel working at onsite locations where chemical and biological (CB) agents are present participated in the course to advance decontamination safety measures and prevent the threat of serious harm or injury.

“The training program is very comprehensive and uses the standard operating procedures (SOPs) from CBARR and the 20<sup>th</sup> Support Command’s subordinate element, the CBRNE (Chemical Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives) Analytical and Remediation Activity (CARA),” said Chris Wilson, an industrial equipment mechanic for CBARR. Wilson is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and served as an aircraft maintenance mechanic for 15 years. His experience wearing PPE and his background in explosives is what attracted him to the job at ECBC’s Chemical Biological Application and Risk Reduction (CBARR) Business Unit seven years ago. It also allowed him to trust the safety procedures and protocols, something that gives him a sense of peace while handling some of the most dangerous hazardous materials, he said.

“Wearing gear like the mask and equipment is something that you get used to over time. There are many people who have trouble getting acclimated to the weight of the suit. Some have trouble standing on one foot due to the oversized boots and you’re wearing clothing that you normally wouldn’t wear. It’s restrictive and there’s limited range of motion, which can cause dehydration and fatigue,” Wilson said. “The new training program is great, especially for newcomers because the hands-on exercises require you to don the full PPE gear. It gives you the actual feeling of being in the suit and mask as you simulate the entire 45-minute decon process.”

ECBC’s CBARR Business Unit is a highly trained and experienced workforce that supports numerous government agencies and whose personnel is certified for a variety of field operations, including the demolition of former chemical and biological process facilities, the remediation of formerly used defense sites, non-proliferation activities and

environmental investigations. All of these missions have an element of risk and danger associated with them, making safety not only the number one priority for all personnel, but a necessary component that ensures the project mission is successful. For 96 years, ECBC's core competency has been working safely with chemical and biological agents in research, engineering and operations for the Department of Defense across the nation and around the globe.

According to Wilson, there is no question how paramount the appropriate training is for personnel deployed on field operations, whether they are a new employee understanding the process for the first time or a veteran who has completed countless operations in their career.

In 2012, JPM-E identified a number of courses that chemical workers are required to take on an annual basis to retain their qualifications. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards, operators must learn new techniques and methodologies for reacting to hazards. The PDS training course got a recent upgrade after a partnership with JPM-E turned the annual required training into a robust three-day program of classroom instruction and hands-on exercises.

"Some of the things we're trying to inject into these course developments are the use of videos, live hands-on training and realistic scenario-based activities," said Karen Price, training development coordinator for JPM-E. "Training can prepare you to think quickly when something out of the ordinary happens at a site location. We need to be flexible and adapt to the new technologies that are being developed in order to determine what will work best for a given environment."

According to Price, soap and water is not the only quick emergency cleanup. A new biological skin decontamination lotion approved by the FDA can be used for decontamination purposes and is one of the many new products JPM-E tries to incorporate into its 20-30 training development programs. The Chemical Demilitarization Training Facility (CDTF) located on the Edgewood area of APG, Md., provide an easy-access, controlled environment conducive for personnel required to complete training.

"Having the ability to set up full scale equipment in the high bay area for scenario-based training is incredibly beneficial," Price said. "All of our courses are developed in conjunction with our partners—ECBC and CARA—whose subject matter experts help shape the guidelines and requirements of a given course. Once it is developed, we'll conduct an internal pilot to run through all of the different module and components before finally offering the class to students, the public or other agencies at APG."

For more information about ECBC, visit <http://www.ecbc.army.mil/>.

*ECBC is the Army's principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. ECBC has achieved major technological advances for the warfighter and for our national defense, with a long and distinguished history of providing the Armed Forces with quality systems and outstanding customer service. ECBC is a U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command laboratory located at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. For more information about the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, please visit our website at <http://www.ecbc.army.mil> or call (410) 436-7118.*

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