

NAV  AIR

Environmental Program



The Shop Towel Re-use Program



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Shop Towel Re-use Saves Money and the Environment

When you reach for a rag to clean up a hazardous material used during maintenance, are you getting a baled rag, or are you using a red shop towel? Your answer makes a difference and thanks to the Shop Towel Re-use Program (STAMP) you have a choice.

Background

Naval aviation maintenance personnel from Operational (O), Intermediate (I) and Depot (D) levels use rags to clean up a host of hazardous materials including oil, paint waste, conversion coatings, strippers, grease, solvents and more. All those rags add up to a big disposal problem for Naval Aviation. In fact, the previously standard-issue baled rags and paper wipes soiled with hazardous waste have been one of the largest contributors to the Navy's hazardous waste stream.

Estimates drawn from the Environmental Systems Allocation (ESA) database suggest that more than 3/4 million tons of waste rags were generated during Operational- and Intermediate-Level Aviation maintenance in 2000. It is estimated that shore-side aviation maintenance operations (O-, I- and D-levels of maintenance) generated nearly two million pounds of waste rags from 1999 through 2001. Table 1 provides more detail on the scope of the problem.

Table 1: Waste Rags Generated During Operational- and Intermediate-Level Aviation Maintenance Operations

Year	Percentage of Navy Aircraft in ESA Database	Total Pounds of Waste Rags	Extrapolating Waste Rags to 100 Percent of Aircraft
1999	18	59,018	327,878
2000	37	272,073	735,334
2001	22	79,104	359,564
TOTALS	—	410,195	1,422,775

Program Benefits

The Naval Supply Systems Command's (NAVSUP) Shop Towel Re-use Program provides an alternative that saves money, performs better and helps limit hazardous waste material disposal. Towel for towel, towels from STAMP cost less than half the price of baled rags. STAMP's red towels are more absorbent, are laundered to allow multiple uses and avoid hazardous waste disposal costs.

Thirty-eight ships and more than 200 shore activities in the Continental United States (CONUS), Bahrain, Greece, Italy and Japan currently are participating in the program.



In 2002, in CONUS and Japan alone, the Navy avoided the purchase and disposal costs for 196,800 bales of rags by laundering 13,800,000 shop towels. This represents a cost avoidance of \$8.1 million.

When industrial launderers receive the used red towels, the red color alerts them that the towels are contaminated with oil, grease and hydraulic fluid (POL) and require a special cleaning process. These laundry facilities must hold current federal, state and local permits for handling hazardous materials. They begin the cleaning process by mechanically extracting much of the oil, grease and fluid. In some cases the extruded materials can be used to fuel the laundry plant.



Shop towels.

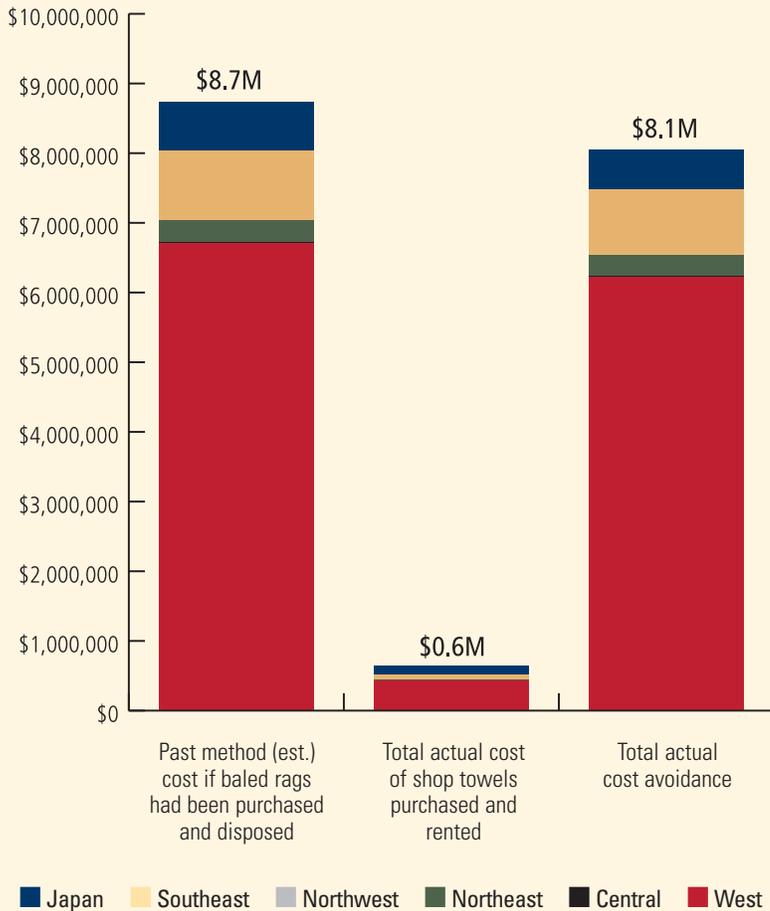


Contract rags aboard the USS Stennis.

Shop Towel Re-use Program Cost Avoidance

Calendar Year 2002

Total Shop Towel Cost Avoidance: \$8.1 Million



Pallets of shop towels.

were re-stocked aboard the STENNIS through vertical replenishment (VERTREP).

Conclusion

The Shop Towel Re-use Program is a worldwide endeavor both afloat and ashore. It offers quality towels that can be laundered and reused, saving money and the environment. All Fleet Concentration Areas provide shop towel re-use services, and the service is available to any Navy activity.

After extrusion, the towels are washed in a special detergent. Wash water is treated to achieve permit-required water quality levels for discharge. Some locations use ozone technology to clean the towels.

Using STAMP

The experience of the USS STENNIS (CVN-74), the west coast prototype platform for re-usable shop towels while underway, demonstrates how the program works. In early FY 2002, the STENNIS deployed with 10,000 government-owned shop towels for its transit to the 5th Fleet Area of Responsibility (AOR). An additional 25,000 replacement shop towels for the STENNIS were deployed—10,000 on the Combat Logistic Force (CLF) ship BRIDGE and 15,000 to Naval Activity Support (NSA) Bahrain.

When the time came, NSA Bahrain and the USS BRIDGE provided hazardous material offload support, including the soiled towels. Shop towels were offloaded in the same manner as soiled baled rags, but were destined for laundering and re-use. NSA Bahrain worked with the Commander Task Force-53 Hazardous Materials Coordinator to replace the soiled towels. Clean towels

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For more information about the NAVAIR environmental program, please visit our web site at <https://www.enviro-navair.navy.mil>.

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