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Randy Huff, a constant speed drive mechanic, uses a water-based cleaner that is safer for him and the environment than previously used chemical-based solvents. Huff welcomes a less-hazardous solution since he cleans equipment daily. (Photo by Margo Wright) | [High-res version of this photo](#)

Directorate cleans up with new water-based solution

by *Jeanne Grimes*
Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center Public Affairs

12/30/02 - **TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. (AFPN)** -- Maintainers here recently replaced their chemical-based cleaning solvent with a water-based product that is proving safer for workers. The new solvent will also save thousands of dollars each year in environmental disposal and compliance costs, said officials.

The water-based cleaning fluid, Hurrifafe 9065, eliminates the need for the harsh PD-

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680 solvent at the constant speed drive repair and overhaul facility here.

Facility workers clean hundreds of thousands of parts off aircraft ranging from the F-15 Eagle to the B-52 Stratofortress before inspecting them for cracks and other imperfections each month. The solvent cleans the grease and grime off the parts, allowing maintenance experts to thoroughly check for flaws that could endanger the aircraft and their crews.

The solvent change is one engineers here have been working toward since the late 1990s and one that takes them another step toward realizing Defense Department officials' vision of having cleaners with low or no volatile organic compounds.

Craig Hale, a commodities engineer in the logistic management directorate's aerospace accessories division, first encountered Hurrissafe 9065 when workers were using it to clean valves. He introduced its use in the CSD shop, where it caught Bernie Habib's eye. Habib is a process engineer in the maintenance directorate's process control and improvement branch.

Hurrissafe 9065, Habib said, meets the most critical test: performance.

"We have to keep those airplanes flying," Habib said.

This new solvent is one way Tinker maintainers make sure that happens, according to Habib. The fact that the new cleaner is good for workers' health and for the environment is a big bonus.

Hurrissafe 9065, a product from PCI of America, is biodegradable and virtually free of the volatile organic compounds and hazardous air pollutants that were raising concerns as Tinker maintainers continued using PD-680 Type II solvent, he said.

"PD-680 is a combustible waste, a toxic substance and an air pollutant," Habib said, emphasizing maintainers used it because it has a proven track record as an "excellent degreaser" with good corrosion-protection properties.

Hurrissafe 9065 tests conducted during 18 months at the CSD shop and the cruise missile shop, showed the water-based cleaner is more than a match for dirt, grime, grease and oil, Habib said.

Hale, who has the approval authority on the future of Hurrissafe 9065 at Tinker, said he will sign the technical order directing the changeover from PD-680 to Hurrissafe 9065, making the new water-based solvent a product everyone who cleans aircraft parts will use.

"I want it to be safe for (workers) and for it to do

the job," Hale said. "I want it to be better, faster, cheaper."

Hurrissafe 9065 gets engine parts clean faster than the PD-680 solvent.

"A two- to three-hour soak time gives a much cleaner product" than PD-680 does, Habib said.

Besides the worker safety benefits, Habib and Gary Gilley, unit chief in the commodities production division, see Hurrissafe 9065 as a good answer to the military's environmental mandate to "try to get solvents out of the cleaning areas."

Experts here estimate substantial savings will come in disposal and environmental-compliance costs. Using the water-based solvent reduces the base's annual volatile-organic-compound tally by about 32,000 pounds, Habib said.

"You have to look at the whole picture," he said. "Before we had to track the solvent used and send it off for disposal. (Hurrissafe 9065) took many, many hours off (the process)."

Initial reactions from workers using the solution were mixed, Gilley said. But as more of the PD-680 disappears from the shop, those same workers are adapting to using the water-based product. Eventually, he added, all but one tank of PD-680 will be taken from the shop.

Habib said PD-680 was used full-strength, whereas Hurrissafe 9065 is a concentrate that is mixed with water in a 1:9 ratio. Part of the product testing here was to determine cost effectiveness.

Habib explained the Hurrissafe 9065 solution recirculates constantly through special filters as parts are being washed. The filters trap the impurities, keeping the solution clean.

The filters are periodically changed and once the dirty residue has been removed, the rinse solution can be disposed of "right into the water treatment" system, Habib said. (Courtesy of Air Force Materiel Command News Service)

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