

Industrial Hygiene Services Support Major US Airbase

August 2008

As a leading US Department of Defense installation for military operations and research, Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico manages and utilizes multiple resources—sophisticated aircraft and weapons systems, industrial shops and machinery, laboratory facilities, and chemical products and other controlled materials—that create potentially hazardous environments. To protect the health and safety of base personnel, BANC3 is currently providing industrial hygiene services at Kirtland AFB under a five-year contract.

Industrial hygiene serves to recognize, evaluate and control hazards to human welfare in the workplace from environmental and physical sources. Work areas are surveilled for a variety of environment-specific hazards—ranging from air contaminants, noise levels and temperature extremes to chemicals and radiation (including x-rays and lasers)—then assessed for level of risk. Other studies examine work practices to ensure the correct handling and storage of equipment and materials, and to determine the effectiveness of personal protective equipment. As expertise in human health, facility operations, federal safety standards and other technical knowledge is required, these investigations are directed by certified Occupational Health and Safety professionals.

At Kirtland AFB, BANC3's contract services are conducted by Ben Johnson, an Air Force veteran and industrial hygienist with 18 years of experience in occupational health, safety and hazardous materials response. Mr. Johnson surveys and tests the industrial and laboratory environments and equipment throughout the base, identifies both existing and potential problems, and implements necessary improvements through defined control measures. To achieve compliance, he applies regulations set by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), Air Force Occupational Safety and Health (AFOSH) standards, and other Air Force directives. He is proficient in the use of all specialized sampling and testing equipment, such as air sampling pumps, gas detection monitors and noise dosimeters.

Kirtland AFB maintains numerous industrial shops; some, including Structural, Propulsion, and Life Support, directly service aircraft, while others provide vehicle and facility maintenance. The base is home to such research and development facilities as the Air Force Research Laboratories (which includes the Air Vehicles Directorate and the Directed Energy Directorate) and the Space Development and Test Wing. To protect the workers staffing these and related base facilities, Mr. Johnson surveys the areas for safety and health deficiencies via a battery of scientific investigations—document reviews, physical observations, worker interviews, and scientific sampling. For example, he has examined how OSHA-regulated chemicals are applied and stored, and whether vehicle maintenance workers were exposed to hazardous noise levels.

Based on initial findings, Mr. Johnson may take such actions as: conducting air monitoring to measure levels of hazardous gasses, vapors, and particulates; performing tests on ventilation systems to ensure they effectively remove hazards from human environments; measuring sound pressure levels to determine noise exposures in industrial shops; and checking respiratory equipment to ensure their proper working condition. Mr. Johnson reports deficiencies—and details necessary improvements—to Bioenvironmental Engineering, base health and safety agencies, and respective shop supervisors. To ensure compliance, he then tracks the implementation and progress of identified control measures which can include substitutions of less hazardous materials; repair or replacement of equipment; enclosing hazardous processes; and retraining staff in personal safety (including gas mask and respirator use). Follow-up measures, including retesting, are completed in accordance to the nature of the deficiency.

Recognizing the urgency to create safe working environments, the Air Force maintains a corps of Bioenvironmental Engineers (BEEs), and Civilian Industrial Hygienists responsible for industrial hygiene, environmental protection, and radiation control at bases worldwide. Through independent, comprehensive industrial hygiene services, BANC3 provides Kirtland's BEEs with invaluable support for health and safety projects throughout the base. This enables BEEs to focus on mission critical assignments such as base emergency response.

Located in southeast Albuquerque, Kirtland AFB covers 51,558 acres and employs over 23,000 Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard personnel. As the third

largest installation in the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC), it provides advanced research and logistics to support the development and maintenance of Air Force weapons systems. Kirtland AFB also houses the AFMC Nuclear Weapons Center—charged with developing effective and safe nuclear weapons systems and programs for the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy—and Sandia National Laboratories.

As a multidisciplinary Engineering and IT consultant, BANC3 combines a range of services found in large engineering firms with the select focus of a small specialty consulting firm. With over 60 project managers, task leaders, professional engineers, surveyors and IT professionals who are experts in their respective fields, we are able to insert singular design, planning and construction support immediately into a project. By providing a unique collection of services all under one roof, we save our clients the effort and expense of using disparate contractors. From our corporate headquarters in Cranbury, NJ, BANC3 implements our custom in-house services on projects across the country.

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