

WRM Quality Assurance (QA) Inspections

We all know the importance of maintaining War Reserve Material (WRM) assets in serviceable condition, yet recent spot inspections have revealed more attention is required when performing Quality Assurance (QA) inspections. This is particularly true for non-deteriorative items, such as litters, blankets, air mattresses, tubing, etc. which some may wrongly assume to have an indefinite service life. Despite being categorized as “non-deteriorative,” these items are still subject to damage and deterioration that will render them unserviceable. The occurrence of deterioration in storage depends on storage conditions, the nature of the materials, and the types of preservation and packaging. Chemical change may occur in some materials even under ideal storage conditions due to chemical interaction of component materials or due to normal aging. Textile finishes may become stiff, soft, or sticky. Rubber and plastic items may warp or crack, or lose their resiliency and become brittle. The surfaces of metal components are prone to rusting, oxidation, or flaking that may render the item useless.

In order to ensure WRM packages are never deployed with unserviceable material, you must adhere to all QA inspection guidance. During end-of-month processing, MEDLOG generates the Quality Assurance Inspection List (PCN SI008-Y16), which identifies WRM assets requiring inspection. This list is produced by detachment, WRM project, section, box, in stock number sequence and shows all non-dated WRM assets due a QA inspection. Use this list to perform QA inspections using the inspection codes and the criteria outlined in DLAR 4155-37, “Material Quality Control Standards.” The two-digit inspection code alerts inspection personnel to potential defects that require special attention. For example, code “B3” alerts personnel to examine the item for any discoloration, growth or decay caused by fungi which indicates the presence of mildew, mold, or dry rot.

You should make sure the correct inspection cycles and inspection codes are loaded in the Master Record. Items with an inspection date of “0000” indicate that the 1st or 2nd inspection cycle is not loaded in the Master Record or the manufacture date is not loaded in the QA record. Refer to

AFCSM 41-230, “MEDLOG Software Users Manual,” and take corrective action as necessary. Also, you may find some NSNs that do not have an inspection code assigned. Again, take corrective action as necessary by ensuring appropriate inspection codes are assigned. Specifically, AFMAN 23-110, Vol 5, Para 19.6.2 states non-deteriorative medical items will be coded with the inspection code “Z9”, which has an initial inspection period of 36 months and a re-inspection period of every 12 months thereafter. The intent of the inspection period is to assure all items are periodically checked for suitability.

Sampling procedures for storage surveillance are designed to provide the broadest range of coverage with a minimum expenditure of man-hours consistent with the desired level of quality assurance. The primary purpose of surveillance sampling is to evaluate selected characteristics and to detect any item that has deteriorated beyond serviceability. DLAR 4155-37, Appendix M and T, provide guidelines for statistical sampling. Typically, 5 percent of containers will be randomly inspected, but you should exercise due diligence and common sense when performing surveillance sampling. The sample should be randomly selected so that it's an adequate representation of inventory, not just the items on top that are most accessible. In addition, you should not inspect the same containers or items each time you perform the QA inspection. You should consider larger sample sizes for items more prone to deterioration due to poor storage conditions, excessive handling and movement, and older items in inventory. If sampling renders the item unserviceable, process a MEDLOG destruction document to record the loss and turn item into DRMO (AFMAN 23-110, Vol 5, Ch. 12, “Gains and Losses of Inventory”).

When determining serviceability, you should examine the item thoroughly for any deterioration. For example, blankets and air mattresses should be unfolded and spread to examine all surfaces and components using flexing and pulling forces to reveal any presence of deterioration. If you have any doubt as to the serviceability of a particular medical item, you should check with an appropriate clinician. Remember, the full capability of your WRM assemblage is only as good as the QA action to ensure every component item is serviceable.
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