

Chinook crews, when you're through using the extended range fuel system (ERFS) tanks, make sure you follow the storage procedures in Section V of TM 55-1560-307-13&P before you store them.

If you don't, the next time you need the ERFS, you could find yourself faceto-face with a slimy fungus when you open the tank hatch. Worse yet, you could end up having to dispose of contaminated fuel before filling the tanks with clean fuel.

The fungus you'll find is a fueleating organism that thrives on all aviation fuels. Any fuel left in the ERFS tanks during storage is a free, allyou-can-eat buffet for that organism. It is often found in hot, humid climates when units fail to properly store the fuel cells and tanks.

The only way to clean up the mess is to get down and dirty inside the tank.

Before you start, always follow all safety instructions when working in fuel cells or tanks.

That means you must make sure the fuel in the tank(s) has been purged before anyone goes inside the tank. Fuel vapors mixed with the right air mixture inside the tank can cause a violent explosion if they are set off by sparks from a tool dropped inside the tank.

And, always remember to have a safety observer standing by during all

maintenance inside the tank. That observer is your safety net. He will help get you out if needed. Here's how to get rid of the fungus:

1. Climb inside the tank and scoop out as much fungus as possible—use a nonmetallic scraper and plastic bucket to clean out the majority of the fungus.

Do not use a metal scraper. The metal may damage the inside of the tank and could cause sparks. If you don't have a non-metallic scraper, you can make one out of a milk carton.

- **2.** Scrub down the inside of the tank and its valve with warm soapy water.
- **3.** Rinse the inside with a high-pressure hose to clean out the soapy water and residue.

- **4.** Eyeball the inside of the tank and its valve to make sure that all fungus is gone. If you still find some, repeat steps 2 through 4 until the fungus is gone.
- **5.** Dry out the tank and valves using lint-free towels or clean, dry, regulated compressed air.
- **6.** Repeat these steps until all tanks, valves and hardware have been cleaned.

The fungus will not return if you follow proper PM storage procedures.

If you have any questions on this procedure, contact Matt Boenker at the Aviation and Missile Command. His phone number is (256) 313-4959 or DSN 897-4959. You can e-mail him at:

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