



# NIEHS/DOE Nuclear Worker Training Program

## Program Goal

The **National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)/Department of Energy (DOE) Nuclear Worker Training Program** provides high-quality health and safety training to DOE site workers to ensure they are prepared to work safely in hazardous environments. The workers are trained to identify hazardous situations and take appropriate actions to protect themselves, fellow workers, and the environment. To accomplish this, NIEHS funds programs to deliver both site-specific and trade-specific training that address complicated DOE site missions, with training periodically updated to reflect lessons learned and emerging topics. The missions often include a combination of nuclear, industrial, chemical, demolition, and construction activities.

## Program Overview

Administered since 1993 by the NIEHS Worker Training Program, the program provides a blend of fundamental and specialized health and safety training to workers in a timely and cost-effective manner. The average cost per contact hour is \$27. Training is accomplished through a partnership involving government, contractors, and labor organizations.

A cornerstone of the program is the use of worker-trainers or peer trainers — employees with experience working in DOE hazardous environments. These selected individuals train their peers while also sharing their experiences and knowledge to support a safer work environment.

## Program Training Summary, 2019-2020

For the period September 1, 2019 - August 31, 2020:



19,925

Workers trained



1,402

Courses provided



214,617

Contact hours delivered

NIEHS/DOE grantees trained at or around 31 sites:



Courses delivered during the year covered topics such as Superfund site worker, respiratory protection, radiological worker, radiological technician, confined space, emergency response, asbestos abatement, hazardous materials transport, electrical safety, and hazard communication.

The workers trained under the program represent a variety of occupational sectors and are a national security asset in emergency response. Additionally, some training is extended to communities surrounding DOE sites, including Native American tribes, who then gain certifications and skills that increase their eligibility for employment at a nearby DOE site or keep them prepared if called upon in an emergency.

## Collaborations with DOE and DOE Contractors

Protecting worker health and safety through training delivery has been a primary goal of the Office of Environmental Management. The training offered under the NIEHS/DOE Nuclear Worker Training Program supports and integrates with DOE safety culture; Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations,

part 851 (10 CFR 851), “Worker Safety and Health Program”; and other initiatives.

Recent collaborations and advancements include:

- NIEHS grantees achieving certification for reciprocity for multiple training courses by the DOE National Training Center.
- NIEHS facilitating connections between DOE site contractors and grantees with training capabilities at that site. These connections are creating opportunities to meet contractor training needs with NIEHS-supported training, which could reduce training redundancy and contractor training costs.
- NIEHS grantees partnering with Native American tribes around the Hanford and Los Alamos National Laboratory sites for training that builds skills and emergency response capabilities.

## Sample Courses Provided

Grantees deliver courses on various hazards, including those found in environmental remediation, laboratories, or the clean energy sector.

- HAZWOPER 40-hr, 24-hr, and Refresher
- Respiratory Protection

- Radiological
- Confined space awareness and rescue
- Asbestos abatement
- Electrical safety and NFPA-70
- HazMat technician
- Fall protection
- HazMat transportation
- General construction and general industry safety
- Safety culture
- First aid and CPR

## The National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training

The Clearinghouse, supported by the NIEHS Worker Training Program, provides technical support to grantees. The Clearinghouse website has reports and other resources on topics specifically related to DOE, as well as a database of curricula developed by NIEHS/DOE grantees. Additionally, the Clearinghouse distributes a Worker Training Program Weekly e-Newsbrief to 1,500 subscribers.

## Program Authorization

The NIEHS/DOE Nuclear Worker Training Program was authorized by Section 3131 of the National Defense Authorization Act (fiscal year 1992) and is implemented through an interagency agreement with DOE. The program was authorized to fund nonprofit organizations with expertise in health and safety training.

*Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training at the Volpentest HAMMER Federal Training Center.* (Photo courtesy of HAMMER)



## Feedback from Trainees

*“The Local [union] has been able to supply trained and qualified workers to our DOE contractors very quickly; in large part due to the [grantee’s] ability to immediately and effectively train our membership. On more than one occasion this year, we would not have been able to meet contractors’ needs if it had not been for our training program.”*

*“This class was very informative and helpful. I have been a union member for 6 years and this [Asbestos Supervisor] class taught me new tips for the job I have not heard before.”*

*“In-depth training from instructors from different parts of the country proved beneficial to me. They brought a wealth of knowledge that was applicable to incidents that could arise in my response area.”*

## For More Information

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**NIEHS Worker Training Program**  
[www.niehs.nih.gov/wtp](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/wtp)

**NIEHS/DOE Nuclear Worker Training Program**  
[https://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat/about\\_wetp/doe/index.cfm](https://www.niehs.nih.gov/careers/hazmat/about_wetp/doe/index.cfm)

**The National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety and Health Training**  
<https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/>