

Occupational Health and Industrial Hygiene (OH/IH)

What is Occupational Health? The OH program preserves and promotes the health of dual-status technicians while preventing and reducing personnel illnesses from work-related exposure to chemical, biological and physical hazards. 13,000 out of 25,000 Federal Technicians have been identified as working with occupational hazards and are entered in the Medical Surveillance Program IAW Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1910 and 1960. Occupational Health oversees and manages the following programs: respiratory protection, hearing conservation, vision conservation, radiation exposed employee monitoring, reproductive health conservation, injury management, return to work, epidemiology (public health patterns), unhealthy working condition abatement, design review, ergonomics, health promotion, the automated external defibrillator (AED) plan management.

What is Industrial Hygiene? Industrial hygiene is the science that anticipates and evaluates potential chemical, physical and biological workplace hazards in more than 3,000 facilities in all 54 States and Territories. This includes 2,645 Readiness Centers, 43 Armed Forces Reserve Centers (AFRC), 728 Field Maintenance Shops (FMS), 130 Combined Support Maintenance Shops (CSMS), 54 Maneuver Area Training Equipment Sites (MATES), 61 Unit Training Equipment Sites (UTES), and 88 Army Aviation Support Facilities (AASF). In addition to primary workplace structures, these facilities have over 27,000 secondary structures and 41 major training centers. Although the 27,000 structures do not require a full annual industrial hygiene survey, they do need to be evaluated for potential workplace hazards. As training requirements increase, new hazards may require monitoring as evidenced by elevated lead levels found in live-fire shoot-houses over the permissible exposure limit in several states.

What has the ARNG done? Provide 54 Occupational Health Nurse positions to manage state programs and seven Regional Industrial Hygienists to manage regional IH surveillance programs including oversight and contract management.

What continued efforts does the ARNG have planned for the future? The ARNG remains committed to support the occupational health and industrial hygiene statutory services for federal employees of the ARNG. Assure that qualified and trained personnel fill the OH and IH positions. Institute a formal review process to physically review the State programs.

Why is this important to the Army? It is the law and safeguarding the health and safety of employees is the right thing to do. People are our most important asset. Ensuring healthy working conditions for federal employees also complies with DoDI 6055.1, DoDI 6055.05, Army Regulation 40-5, Army Regulation 385-10.