

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of February 25, 2013 – Becoming a Safety Trained Supervisor

“Safety is number one.” I have spent many years in the field of occupational safety and health (S&H) and through my tenure I have heard every organization – without exception – say this or some statement quite similar. I believe that companies do not want to see employees injured or sustain an illness due to an exposure from a contaminant associated with an assigned work task. While the reasons for not sustaining and occupational injury or illness can be numerous (work stoppage, increased incident statistics, an unfavorable reputation, etc) with few instances, the main concern has always been for the good of the employees.

Having S&H professionals in your organization is, not just important; it is essential. In today’s work environment, integration of S&H within each step of a project has been proven to be a very effective approach to ensure hazards are identified, evaluated and controlled. This means having people that are dedicated and qualified within the field of S&H participating in all phases of work. Due to contract requirements and availability issues, a relatively new concept has emerged that offer organizations a solution to ensure S&H is always present. This is the establishment of the Safety Trained Supervisor or STS.

STS is a certification program of the Council on Certification of Health, Environmental and Safety Technologists (CCHEST). The STS certification program has national accreditation from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). It has international accreditation through ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024 and national standards through ASTM E1929-98. The STS program is a joint venture of the Board of Certified Safety Professionals and the American Board of Industrial Hygiene. The STS in Construction was first offered in 1995. OSHA recognizes the STS Construction credential through a voluntary agreement between OSHA and CCHEST that was signed May 21, 2002 at the 12th Annual Construction Safety and Health Conference in Chicago. Having Safety Training Supervisors (STSs) in your organization is one way to ensure better control of workplace incidents while showing customers (potential and existing) a strong/dedicated commitment to S&H.

The Safety Trained Supervisor (STS) certification provides a means for employers to verify safety and health knowledge of first-line supervisors and managers. The program requires applicants to meet minimum education and experience requirements and demonstrate knowledge of basic safety and health standards and practices.

The STS certification program is intended for individuals who:

- Are managers at any level.
- Are first line supervisors of work groups or organization units.
- Have a safety responsibility for a work group that is part of other work duties.

Safety Trained Supervisors are not safety specialists or safety practitioners. Typical candidates have a safety responsibility that is adjunct, collateral or ancillary to their job duties. Their main job duties are in a craft or trade, in leadership, supervision or management, or in a technical specialty. If safety responsibilities involve a greater portion of job duties, the role is more likely to be that of a safety technician/technologist or safety professional.

The typical STS helps an employer implement safety programs at the worker level through supervisory, safety committee or similar safety and health leadership roles. Safety tasks often include monitoring for

job hazards, helping ensure regulatory compliance, training employees in safety practices, performing safety record keeping tasks, coordinating corrections for safety problems within or among work groups, and communicating with safety specialists or management.

To gain eligibility for a STS examination, you must be of good moral character and meet the following three requirements:

- Have two years of experience in any industry or in the industry related to the version of the STS examination to be taken.
- Have one year of experience as a supervisor or safety leader of a work group. Examples are manager, foreman, crew chief, superintendent, or member of a safety committee. This experience can be concurrent with Requirement #1. If you are training to become a supervisor or safety leader and do not have the one year of experience, you can substitute two additional years of industry experience in Requirement #1.
- Have completed 30 hours of formal safety training through a single course or multiple training courses.

To achieve the STS certification, you must pass a Safety Trained Supervisor examination and are offered by computer at Pearson VUE testing center locations around the world every business day. The examination contains 100 multiple-choice questions and candidates have two hours to complete it. Currently, there are four areas-of-emphasis for which a person may choose.

STS-Construction: The STS-Construction examination program is the first of the STS programs and has been in existence since 1995. The program is intended for managers, first-line construction supervisors, superintendents, foremen, crew chiefs, and craftsmen who have responsibilities to maintain safe conditions and practices on construction job sites.

STS-General Industry: Starting in 2004, the STS-General Industry examination program features workers in pest control, lawn care repair and maintenance, facility services, health care social assistants, and administrative and support management. Those individuals who pursue this program generally work in transportation, utilities and manufacturing. This examination program requires a supervisor to demonstrate his or her understanding of the principles and practices of supervision in the context of safety.

STS-Petrochemical: The STS-Petrochemical examination program, which began in 2004, is intended for crew chiefs, supervisors and managers who handle safety in petrochemical environments. Usually, individuals who follow the STS-Petrochemical certification track remote site work with hazardous chemicals.

STS-Mining: Seeing a need to expand the STS line to include mining, BCSP created the STS-Mining program beginning in 2011. The program will emphasize safety and incident investigation within job sites and among work

Persons who successfully complete the exam process become part of a recognized group of professionals and contribute a tremendous value-added distinction for your company (yes, a certificate and a wallet-sized certificate is sent to each STS). There is a recertification program that helps to ensure that certificants are current in safety and health matters.

If you don't know where you're going, any road'll take you there

George Harrison (February 25, 1943- November 29, 2001)