



# The New England Consortium's Quarterly

A Newsletter about Working with Toxic Materials, Health and Safety Training, Law and Public Policy

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## Confined Space Training

Along with their classmates and harnesses the young and old of heart from the *JFY NetWorks* started their day at The New England Consortium's (TNEC) training center in Lowell this past January to be trained in the intricacies of working in a confined space. *JFY NetWorks*, founded in 1976, is Boston's largest workforce and career development training center for youth and adults.

One of the keys to *JFYNetWorks* success has been its expertise as an intermediary between the needs of the community and the needs of the labor market. The organization brings together employers who have unfilled job openings and individuals who need training and motivation to enable them to work. *JFY NetWorks* has developed its curricula in collaboration with local employers, col-

leges and universities, and other community-based organizations.

Responding to a rapidly changing labor market, *JFY NetWorks* has continued to evolve over time with new strategies that address the training needs of a skills-deficient labor pool and the increasingly specialized needs of industry. With the boom in environmental technology industries and biotechnology related jobs, *JFY NetWorks* teamed up with TNEC for hazardous materials training and confined space training.

TNEC has worked with the group for over 10 years. This year was the first time the students worked with TNEC to learn how to protect their own health and safety when entering a confined space. According to OSHA, "Many workplaces con-



**Rich Sadkowski, TNEC's Training Resources Coordinator instructs students during a Confined Space training.**

tain spaces that are considered to be 'confined' because their configurations hinder the activities of any employees who must enter into, work in, and exit

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## Local Public Health

The **Local Public Health Institute of Massachusetts** was created in April 2005. Its focus is emergency preparedness training for the diverse local public health workforce in the Commonwealth: health officers and agents, sanitarians, public health nurses, board members, and other local staff and volunteers.

The Institute is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and governed by an Advisory Council comprised of local health experts and stakeholders from academia, professional associations, and state and local government.

**The New England Consortium** Hazardous Waste Worker Health and Safety

Training Program represents UMass Lowell's **Center for Public Health Research and Health Promotion**, the **Department of Community Health and Sustainability** and the **School of Health and Environment** on the Advisory Council of the Massachusetts Local Public Health Institute.

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## Confined Space Training

from them. In many instances, employees who work in confined spaces also face increased risk of exposure to serious physical injury from hazards such as entrapment, engulfment, and hazardous atmospheric conditions. Confinement itself may pose entrapment hazards, and work in confined spaces may keep employees close to hazards, such as an asphyxiating atmosphere, than they would be otherwise. For example, confinement, limited access, and restricted airflow result in hazardous conditions that would not arise in an open workplace.”

“The students were remarkable, good listeners and worked hard to get it right,” Tom Estabrook, TNEC Lead Educator, commented about

the students he has worked with for over 10 years. Comments from of the students ranged from, “U Guys Rock,” “Keep up the good work,” to “All the instructors were excellent and very knowledgeable of their work. Everybody brought different qualities and insight to my learning, thanks and keep up the good work.”

Confined Space training is presented by TNEC at our training site in the Wannalancit Mill in Lowell, MA. On-site training is also available. For further information on TNEC training please visit our website at [www.uml.edu/tnec](http://www.uml.edu/tnec) or contact us at 978.934.3257.



Pictured above is Rene Turcotte from the Physical Plant staff taking part in a Confined Space training presented by TNEC this past January. Rene along with Glenn MacDonald, Safety Specialist with the Environmental Health & Safety office (not pictured) attended the training to learn the techniques of working in a confined space.

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## Local Public Health

The mission of the Local Public Health Institute of Massachusetts is to provide and ensure a competent workforce by developing and strengthening the capacities of the 351 local boards of health (board members and staff) to respond to public health threats and emergencies through sound education and training. The Institute:

- Serves as a clearinghouse for information about training opportunities for local public health board members and staff;
- Undertakes ongoing assessment at the local level;
- Identifies and develops courses for local public health audiences; and
- Develops and maintains strategic alliances to support local boards of health in their day-to-day work.

Still a work in progress, the Institute has offered a number of classroom trainings in response to emergency preparedness needs identified by Regional Coalitions. It is now working to enhance web-based training opportunities and on-line resources to complement the classroom offerings—and to present the information in a way that helps users navigate the overwhelming number of resources now available.

Another current Institute initiative involves helping individuals in various local health roles identify the essential skill sets (“competencies”) for their work and highlighting trainings that are available to develop these competencies. Check back for updates on this important project.

During the 2006 spring semester TNEC hosted and assisted the

Institute with the logistics of setting up its twelve week Foundations of Local Public Health Practice course here at UMass Lowell for local public health staff in our region. It was well attended and holding the course here at UML was greatly appreciated by our colleagues around the state.

A new two-hour course has been developed relative to **Educating Communities on Flu Care at Home**. It will be offered eleven times at different locations throughout the state.

To learn more about the Flu Care at Home initiative, visit the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Influenza website at [www.mass.gov/dph/flu](http://www.mass.gov/dph/flu).

For more information on the Institute and its programs go to the website address: <http://www.masslocalinstitute.org/>

## News from the COSH's

### Western MassCOSH...

John Thoma, the Program Director and Trainer at Western MassCOSH is moving on from his work here in New England. It is with a deep amount of sadness that we say good bye to John. John made friends quickly and helped steer Western MassCOSH through some very difficult times when Aaron Wilson, the Program Director prior to John, suddenly passed away.

John joined Western MassCOSH in 2000 and will be moving on to warmer and sunnier environments in the western part of the country. His wit, charm and intelligence will be sorely missed by the staffs of The New England Consortium and Western MassCOSH and certainly the lives that he touched through his training. We wish him nothing but the best in all of his endeavors!

Taking over the helm at Western MassCOSH is Mike Florio. Mike has served on the board of Western MassCOSH and will now lead the program as the new Program Director and trainer.

### New Hampshire COSH

The New Hampshire House Bill 533, requiring OSHA 10-Hour construction safety training for workers on all public works contracts over \$100,000, has gone

into effect on September 14, 2007. All employees are to complete the training prior to starting on the job.

The New England Consortium (TNEC) and New Hampshire COSH present 10-Hour Construction Safety and Health training. For training dates and times please visit TNEC's website at [www.uml.edu/tneec](http://www.uml.edu/tneec).

### MassCOSH Teens Lead At Work (TL@W)

TL@W is known throughout the state as a forceful advocate for young worker safety and workplace rights. TL@W provides an empowering environment where teens develop their leadership and organizing skills, reach out to other teen workers, and monitor the enforcement of the Child Labor Laws.

MassCOSH forges alliances between unions and TL@W to improve safety for youth workers and educate youth about the critical role that unions play in ensuring worker rights. A cadre of teen leaders provides a wide range of educational programs; in unions, schools, and communities to expand protections for young workers. TL@W builds bridges among native-born, documented and undocumented teens in the fight for young worker rights.

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## Legislation to Reign in Toxic Chemicals Use Passes in MA Senate

The *Safer Alternatives Bill* will require evaluation of designated "Priority Toxic Chemicals" which are used in Massachusetts and are linked to chronic illnesses, and then mandate safer alternatives to these chemicals where feasible. The bill will provide for transition assistance to businesses and increase the international competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses.

"We applaud the action of those Senators who took a stand to defend public health and we are hopeful that members of the House do the same,"

said Erin Boles, Associate Executive Director of the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. "This is a great day for families across the state who are struggling with cancer and other illnesses linked to toxic chemicals—today's vote in the Senate gives us all hope for a healthier tomorrow."

A majority of House members supports the bill, including lead sponsor Representative Jay Kaufman (D-Lexington) and Representative Frank Smizik (D-Brookline, Co-Chair of the Environment Committee.

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## Legislation to Reign in Toxic Chemicals Use Passes in MA Senate

The Massachusetts Senate passed legislation that will safeguard public health by replacing toxic chemicals with safer alternatives. Supporters of *An Act for a Healthy Massachusetts: Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals* (The Safer Alternatives Bill) praised the Senate's action that takes the bill one step closer to becoming law. The bill would also help Massachusetts expand trade with foreign markets that have recently tightened toxic chemical standards such as the European Union.

Led by Senator Steven Tolman (D-Brighton) and Senator Pam Resor (D-Acton), efforts to move the bill forward in the Senate gained momentum in the wake of last year's product recalls over hazardous ingredients such as lead in children's toys and lipstick. It is supported by the Alliance for a Health Tomorrow (AHT), a coalition of over 160 organizations (health, labor, scientific, environmental, faith

and community groups) working to promote the use of safer alternatives to toxic chemicals where feasible. Legislative sponsors and advocates from AHT proposed the legislation in response to mounting scientific evidence that indicates toxic chemicals are contributing to a chronic disease epidemic.

"The Senators have realized that this is a business friendly way to protect our health from toxic chemicals. It gently weans companies off outdated toxic chemicals by providing safer and more competitive alternatives," said Lee Ketelsen, Clean Water Action Regional Director. "We owe President Murray, and all Senate champions, our thanks for their leadership in protecting the health and economy of Massachusetts."

"Asking manufacturers to make safer products is nothing extraordinary especially when proven, effective alternatives to toxic chemicals exist," said Senator Pamela Resor (D-

Action), Co-Chair of the Environment Committee. "Massachusetts is poised to be the leader in the nation for promoting toxic substitution with the important research being done at the **Toxic Use Reduction Institute (TURI) at UMass Lowell**. If we can keep toxics out of everyday products, then we will be safeguarding the health of our environment and our children."

"This legislation will put Massachusetts at the forefront of responsible chemical policy and safeguard the residents of the Commonwealth from the very real and unseen dangers of toxic chemicals," said Senator Steven Tolman (D-Brighton), lead Senate sponsor of the bill. "These chemicals have, unfortunately, become a part of our everyday lives and have been proven to be the root cause of many of the health disorders affecting the people of this state."

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