TNEC Learns Just How Busy the Last Year Was

Between September 1, 2000 and the end of May, The New England Consortium (TNEC) delivered 66 courses for 936 workers involving 21,248 hours of instruction in our core Health and Safety training program.

Of these 66 courses, TNEC ran 11 40-hour Site Worker sessions, seven 24-hour Emergency Response courses, 22 8-hour Site Worker refreshers, 23 eight-hour refreshers for Emergency Responders, two eight-hour general awareness courses, and one site-specific Emergency Response Incident Command course.

Contract clients have included public-sector workers from OSHA Region I, the Lowell Fire Department, the Region 6 HAZMAT Team (MA), the U.S. Geological Service, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, UMASS Medical Center, the U.S. DOT Volpe Center, Narragansett Bay Commission, and the Boston Environmental Strike Team. Private-sector contract training has been delivered to companies such as Continued on Page 4

Training in Neighborhoods That Are at Risk

TNEC launched a Community Environmental Literacy and Awareness Training Project last year designed and coordinated by our partners, the five Coalitions for Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) organizations throughout New England (CT, MA, NH & RI).

The primary goal of the project is to build collaborative Continued on Page 2

TNEC Training Calendar

Inside: Plan Ahead -- Year-Long Training Calendar

TNEC has scheduled these open enrollment courses. All will be held at the Lowell, MA Training Center, unless otherwise noted. The schedule is subject to change. To register, call 1-978-934-3197, or go to www.uml.edu/TNEC on the web. Courses may be customized and held at your site.

40-Hr Haz Waste Worker
November 5-9

8-Hr Haz Waste Refresher
October 16
November 20
December 11

24-Hr Emerg Responder
October 2-4
December 4-6

8-Hr ER Refresher
November 15

Hat’s Off to Rich

Rich Sadkowski, TNEC Training Resources Coordinator, started working with TNEC 11 years ago this month. On this anniversary, we decided to profile him here and share the importance of his work and spirit over the years.

As the Training Resources Coordinator, Rich’s responsibilities include equipment set-up and preparation for all health and safety training at the TNEC Continued on Page 4

MassCOSH trained Chelsea-area residents.
Training for Those in Areas Where Health and Safety Are at Risk

Continued from Page 1

working relationships among community, labor, and environmental organizations, and to promote Health and Safety Training. The training is designed to help facilitate a process through which the regional COSH groups can build and strengthen relationships with community-based organizations that address environmental health and safety issues.

The target audience for the training is workers and residents in economically disadvantaged areas where health and safety is at some level of risk from potential exposure to chemical hazards through releases and the possibility of more serious off-site consequences.

Over the last year, the COSH organizations have been working with community organizations, schools, community colleges, unions, environmental groups and public health officials to determine community needs. As a result, the Environmental Literacy Project has enjoyed some real successes.

MassCOSH worked with Chelsea/East Boston/Roxbury area residents, STRIVE, and representatives of the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative and the Chelsea Creek Action Group concerned about toxic dumping, Brownfields clean-up, and industrial pollution in Chelsea. A training session was held on a Saturday in March and despite inclement weather, more than 58 diverse participants actively engaged in the training. Components of the session included a neighborhood walking inventory and risk-mapping activity with 15 students and sessions on health hazards identification, routes of exposure, health and safety rights, and protective measures.

Western MassCOSH has developed a curriculum for three community organizations that are concerned with local Superfund sites. One site, in Deerfield, MA, is a toxic dump with significant waste materials from decades of railroad dumping and spilling. The area is a central hub for freight between Maine and the Midwest. Staff from Western MassCOSH are hoping to involve railroad workers in development of the training and to see if there are ways to promote dialogue between residents and past workers. The training will be this fall.

ConnectiCOSH has done much outreach on the Environmental Literacy Project to different organizations and has attracted related training opportunities, including a lead health and safety training for 40 school nurses. One of the most significant linkages has been with the Hartford Environmental Justice Network, which is concerned about the impact of diesel emissions from idling buses in densely populated neighborhoods. As part of a wider campaign, ConnectiCOSH is planning environmental literacy training with the unions representing bus drivers. They plan to open the training to residents in the community as well.

RICOSH is working with state health and environmental agencies and the Occupational and Environmental Health Center. Their environmental literacy training will assist affected communities in understanding the public health impact of Brownfields and will cover such topics as: understanding hazards and risks, basic toxicology, understanding medical and environmental monitoring, and where to get reliable information. The training will be delivered this winter, is designed to improve communications between community residents, environmental organizations, and health and regulatory officials.

NHCOSH has undergone a process of exhaustive contacts with unions, agency personnel, and community groups and compiled useful background data and research. The organization has determined the best audience for this awareness training and will deliver a training in Concord, NH on December 11 to part-time and volunteer health officers.

TNEC will continue to provide training that fosters increasing involvement in addressing and preventing exposures to potentially life-threatening and economically destructive hazards.

If you have questions about Environmental Literacy Training, please contact us or your local COSH organization:

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The New England Consortium’s Quarterly is a publication of The New England Consortium, based at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, TEL: 978-934-3257. To receive The Quarterly at no charge, contact Cathy Callahan, UMASS Lowell, Lowell, MA 01854. Send letters to TNEC Quarterly at the same address. FAX: 978-452-5711. Members of the Consortium include coalitions for occupational safety and health (COSHes) in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Western Massachusetts, and UMASS Lowell. TNEC provides health and safety training for hazardous waste workers and emergency response personnel under a grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Craig Slatin, ScD, MPH, is principal investigator. Mary Lee Dunn is newsletter Production Editor.
EPA Decides in GE-Hudson River and GE-Milford, NH Clean-Ups

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christie Whitman has ordered a controversial clean-up of the Hudson River that may involve dredging up to 2.65 million cubic yards of the waterway north of Troy, N.Y., in order to rid the river of more than a million pounds of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) that were dumped there by General Electric Co. for three decades before a ban in 1977.

PCBs are thought to cause cancer in exposed individuals and they bioaccumulate in fish. GE had vigorously fought an EPA order to dredge the river. GE’s planned clean-up costs were put at $480 million in a Washington Post story in July, which also pointed out that the company’s net income is $3.9 billion.

The plan generally followed one proposed last December, before President Clinton left office. However, the EPA also intends to include a series of performance standards to evaluate the progress of the work. The agency aims to ensure that the clean-up itself does not involve greater risks of PCB exposure. Recent studies have raised questions about the impacts of dredging the Hudson.

The agency had received 70,000 comments about the Hudson clean-up plan from community residents and other interested parties. And GE is negotiating over the costs of cleaning up 87 contaminated sites, the Post story said.

In another case, GE was ordered to clean up soil and groundwater contamination at a Milford, NH Superfund site, Fletcher’s Paint Works, which sold latex and solvent paints from 1949-'91.

Environmental contamination there resulted from storage of hazardous substances on the properties, the EPA said. The site was named to the EPA’s National Priorities List in 1989.

Work has been done there earlier: EPA removed more than 800 drums of toxicics and installed a temporary cover over the soil in 1989. In 1995, PCB-contaminated soils on residential properties on Mill Street were excavated and disposed. The parcel is near the downtown area.

Varney Heads EPA’s New England Region

Robert Varney, former head of the New Hampshire environmental agency for 12 years, has become head of the New England regional office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency. He was expected to emphasize partnerships with the states, according to The Boston Globe, which his past priorities have included improving air quality and reducing environmental mercury. The newspaper said he is “well-liked by environmentalists and respected for his ability to compromise with opposing groups ...”

2,700 to Pay in NH clean-up

Some 2,700 responsible parties are sharing major costs of a $30-million-plus clean-up of oils and solvents in soil and groundwater at the Beede Waste Oil site at Plaistow, N.H. Among them are state and federal entities and communities elsewhere in New England that shipped wastes to Beede as long as 80 years ago. It is one of the largest groups held responsible for a Superfund clean-up in the region, according to The Boston Globe, which noted, “If waste generated by someone winds up in a Superfund site, they can be forced to help clean it up -- no matter how it got there.”

Military Waste Targeted

Community activists, scientists, military, state and federal officials participated in a conference in July in Amherst that focused on polluted military sites and the government’s role in cleaning them up. The weekend conference was hosted by the Institute for Science and Interdisciplinary Studies (ISIS).

Professor Herb Bernstein of Hampshire College, an ISIS scientist, told the Associated Press, “We’re giving these people a forum so their stories can be heard, and to see how we could apply science and technology to cleaning pollution at these federal sites.” Different methods were demonstrated for clean-ups of various waste chemicals.

New Site Worker Refresher Starts Sept. 18

TNEC’s new site worker refresher curriculum focuses on three main topics and how they relate to work at hazardous waste sites: Ergonomic considerations for site work; pollution prevention; and developments in air monitoring and interpretation of air monitoring results.

Ergonomics is the term used to describe one’s mechanical use of the body and how it interacts with the work it is asked to perform. In site work, chemical and safety hazards are not the only ones to think about. Evaluation and control of ergonomic hazards also can play an important role in protecting health.

This year’s refresher focuses on some ergonomic considerations for material sampling and handling. We examine how body postures, repetitions, force and rest periods are relevant to site work. We also discuss how one might handle selected poor ergonomic situations in order to create better conditions to avoid ergonomic injuries.

A second topic this year is pollution prevention, which includes material substitution, process and product changes and the importance of these issues for the health and safety of workers and the communities that surround their facilities. This topic should be of interest to personnel at fixed sites.

Based on comments made on refresher evaluations during the last year, this year’s refresher will include a discussion about developments in air monitoring and an activity in which attendees will be asked to interpret sets of air monitoring results for the protection of worker health and safety.

TNEC QUARTERLY

PAGE THREE
11 Years and Rolling: Sadkowski Maintains Equipment, Supplies, Humor

Continued from Page 1

training center and at work sites throughout the New England region, maintenance of training equipment, purchasing of training supplies and equipment, coordination with trainers and Training Manager, set-up for hands-on portions of courses, and maintenance of computer-based and project library inventory.

“Rich is key to making the TNEC Training Project run smoothly,” explained Training Manager Wayne Sanborn. “He works quietly and diligently behind the scene to ensure that the appropriate equipment is available wherever and whenever it might be needed.”

Principal Investigator Craig Slatin called Rich “an essential support” for TNEC. “He has worked diligently and thoughtfully all of these years to make certain that our training staff has the foundation necessary for delivering effective training. He thinks carefully about the needs of our students and trainers and is always seeking new ways of enhancing the quality of the training.

“He has come up with many creative solutions to problems that were presenting barriers to the training. These have included: building a shower station for the decontamination drill practice; making arrangements with our compressed air supplier to deliver air to contract courses so that we could use the truck to carry other materials and not need to cause the trainers physical strain from moving heavy tanks; finding resource materials to use in the courses; and his ongoing efforts to optimize the effectiveness of the training center.”

Last but not least, Slatin said, “he has such a terrific sense of humor and a warm, generous heart. He always looks for ways to lighten the load for the rest of us, by helping us out and keeping us laughing.”

Rich says, “I enjoy my job a lot. I love the people that I work with and hope to be here for another 11 years.”

One of the biggest changes -- and challenges -- Rich has seen over the years is the upgrade in technology, for example, air monitoring equipment and classroom audio-visual equipment.

Starting this month, Rich will manage a video lending library transferred from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to TNEC. Rich says that he is excited about facilitating this effort.

Rich lives in Dracut with his wife Shari and their three daughters: Erin, 16, Mindy, 13, and Kristen, 11.