

## **NAVY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CENTER'S WEB-BASED INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE FIELD OPERATIONS MANUAL**

The mission of the Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) is to support Navy and Marine Corps readiness goals through leadership in the prevention of



**Industrial Hygiene Officer measuring sound pressure level generated by equipment in a work environment**

disease and promotion of good health practices. NEHC's objectives include support of occupational health, environmental health, and preventive medicine services to sailors and marines stationed aboard Navy ships and at shore stations. Navy industrial hygienists are essential to accomplishing NEHC's mission and the Navy's disease prevention goals by preventing workplace hazards that may cause or contribute to work-related illnesses, injuries, disabilities, and even deaths.

Industrial hygiene is the science that is dedicated to prevention of occupational illnesses and injuries through recognition, evaluation, and management of the risks of overexposure to chemical and physical hazards in the workplace. Industrial hygienists develop methods for eliminating or controlling identified workplace hazards. In a way, industrial hygienists are detectives who search out and identify health hazards in the work environment and identify solutions for preventing occupational illnesses. They also investigate the potential sources of suspected or verified work-related illnesses.

NEHC's Industrial Hygiene Directorate developed an *Industrial Hygiene Field Operations Manual* (IHFOM) to assist Navy industrial hygienists. The IHFOM has been a basic reference for Navy industrial hygienists since 1986. The manual assists industrial hygienists to complete their field surveys of potentially health hazardous work conditions and their survey reports. The IHFOM provides



**While standing watch, a Seaman wears hearing protection to prevent hearing loss due to overexposure to noise.**

information on equipment maintenance and calibration, requirements for respiratory protection and other personal protective equipment, managing and containment of hazardous materials spills, and assessments of indoor air quality.



**Boatswain's Mate disconnects a pallet during an underway replenishment. Training and supervision decrease the risk of injuries and cumulative trauma for sailors loading and unloading ships' supplies.**

Periodically, the IHFOM requires revision in order to stay current with developments in the occupational safety and health field. A full revision and distribution of the IHFOM technical manual typically requires two to six years. In order to be able to quickly respond to feedback from field Industrial Hygienists on the usefulness of the IHFOM and to get up-to-date information out to the field Industrial Hygienists in a timely manner, NEHC's Industrial Hygiene Directorate posted the IHFOM on NEHC's website in 1999. Posting the NEHC IHFOM on the Internet allows *continual maintenance* updates of relevant sections of the Manual, as needed, without revising the entire Manual. The NEHC Industrial Hygiene Directorate can now rapidly update the NEHC IHFOM to keep up with state-of-the-art changes in the industrial hygiene profession. Using web publishing, topics on which the field industrial hygienists request clarification or additional information are updated in weeks rather than waiting for the next revision and publication of

the IHFOM. Current additions to the IHFOM include such topics as wipe sampling, updated directions for respiratory protection, calibration of

audiometric booths, and calibration and use of direct-reading industrial hygiene survey and monitoring equipment.

The NEHC IHFOM is posted on the NEHC website at <http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/ih/ihfom99.htm>. Updates are marked and dated to highlight what is new or revised. An email link is also provided on the website for feedback and suggestions for additional improvements to the IHFOM.

Web publishing the NEHC IHFOM allows the NEHC Industrial Hygiene Directorate to provide better customer service to the Navy and Marine Corps by providing the Navy's industrial hygienists limitless access to their field manual and fast response to their needs for up-to-date industrial hygiene information.

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