

## NIOSH Celebrates 50 Years

The [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH) began operations on April 28, 1971. The Occupational Safety and Health Act, which authorized the creation of NIOSH, was signed by President Nixon on December 29, 1970. In 2021, NIOSH is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

To commemorate, NIOSH will be publishing a series of blogs and [eNews](#) that will highlight research and milestones from the past 50 years. The first blog post in the series, [NIOSH Celebrates 50 Years in 2021](#), discusses the early beginnings of NIOSH.

In their mission to train occupational safety and health practitioners and researchers, NIOSH established education and research centers (ERCs) across the United States. These centers play a significant role in training occupational health and safety leaders to help prevent workplace injuries and illnesses. There are currently 18 ERCs, including the Heartland Center at the University of Iowa.



*Science at work for people at work*

### Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Training Resources

In 2019, a total of 5,333 workers died because of on-the-job injuries. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), this is the highest number of worker fatalities since 2007. Such statistics relay the importance of having a safety training program in place.

Occupational health and safety training is a fundamental element in workplace hazard control and should be reviewed systematically. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has outlined recommended practices for safety and health programs. The full guide can be found [here](#). NIOSH provides a comprehensive overview of [a systematic review of the effectiveness of training and education](#).

## National Radon Action Month

To raise awareness and save lives, the EPA has declared January as [National Radon Action Month](#). The campaign sets to inform Americans on the risks associated with radon exposure and encourages everyone to “Test. Fix. Save a Life.”

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that you cannot see, smell, or taste. Radon is considered the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) estimates that 1 out of every 15 homes have high concentrations of radon.

Radon is released from radium in the ground and enters the home through cracks, or other penetrations, in a building's foundation. A secondary cause of radon in a building is from off-gassing of radon from use of ground water. In rare cases, building materials can also be a source of radon within a building. While there are geographic areas that are more prone to higher levels of radon, radon can be detected at high concentrations even in states or regions considered to have low radon potential. The only way to know if the occupants of a building are at risk of elevated radon exposure is to perform radon testing within the building.

Dr. Bill Field, Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Iowa College of Public Health and



Deputy Director at the Heartland Center, is recognized as one of the foremost authorities on radon. He has been performing radon-related research, and outreach, for over 25 years pioneering novel methods for reconstructing radon exposure for large epidemiology studies. Dr. Field was the recipient of the University of Iowa's Michael J. Brody award for his long-term public health commitment to the community, state, region, and nation. In collaboration with the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Dr. Field helped to develop a guide for health care providers, [Reducing the Risk from Radon: Information and Interventions](#).

Has your home, or building where you work, been tested for radon? Testing is the only way to know if a building has a radon problem. You can find more information on radon testing by calling 1-800-SOS-RADON (1-800-767-7236).

**Additional Info:** [Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs](#); [On-the-Job Deaths Reach Highest Level in 12 Years](#); [The National Radon Action Plan](#); [Radon Guidance for Health Care Providers](#); [Reducing the Risk from Radon](#)

## The Hazards of Winter Weather

Winter weather hazards can include slippery roads and surfaces, strong winds, and extreme cold, which can lead to illnesses, injuries, or fatalities.

Working outdoors in the winter requires additional preparation by both employers and workers. Employees should be trained on the hazards of winter weather such as cold stress, slippery roads and surfaces, and windy conditions.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration advises workers to “[Plan. Equip. Train.](#)” for winter weather. Safe work practices should be implemented to protect workers.

CDC recommendations for preventing slips on snow and ice:

- Wear shoes or boots with traction.
- Be especially careful when entering or exiting a vehicle.
- Assume that all wet or dark areas on pavement are slippery.
- Walk like a penguin.

### [How to Walk Like a Penguin](#)

Keep your hands out of your pockets. Extend them out to your sides to help you keep your balance, like you're walking a tight rope.

Bend your knees slightly, point your toes outward a little bit, and walk flat-footed. Take short, slow steps.

With each step, keep your center of gravity above your front leg. Normally, we put our leading foot out and let it pull us forward. When you penguin walk, you want to keep your body directly above your foot as you place it.

If you do fall backward, try to tuck your chin. That way your back, not your head, will hit the ground first.

## Safety Resources for a Diverse Workforce

Did you know that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides compliance assistance resources in Spanish? The resources can be found at <https://www.osha.gov/complianceassistance/index-hispanic>.

In addition, OSHA has a large number of COVID-19 resources available in Spanish, including alerts, guidance, publications, public service announcements, posters, videos, and wallet cards. These resources can be found at <https://www.osha.gov/spanish-resources-covid-19.html>.

COVID-19 publications are available in a number of other languages on the [OSHA website](#).

## Looking for more resources? [OSHA on Winter Weather](#)

## Safety is a 4 Letter Word

**Tuesday, February 16, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

Learn strategies to improve culture and collaboration in this free 1-hour webinar on safety culture presented by Mark Breslin in partnership with the Hawkeye on Safety Conference.

The webinar will examine the critical roles of culture, buy-in, and accountability that have taken safety from a resented afterthought to a primary value system for top organizations. Register today at

<https://tinyurl.com/hossafetywebinar>.

*Save the date for Hawkeye on Safety 2021  
September 30, 2021 at the Coralville Marriott*

## Occupational Hearing Conservationist Recertification

The Heartland Center is a sponsor of CAOHC-Approved Hearnvg Conservationist Recertification Course taking place in March with Course Director, Laura Kauth.

This hybrid course provides online instruction via Zoom, and a face-to-face day of hands-on, practical training. Details can be found on the [Heartland Center website](#).

- Wednesday, March 15, 2021 – Online
- Thursday, March 16, 2021 – On Site at the Village Theatre in Davenport

## Protecting the Workforce from COVID-19

Learn how to protect your workforce from COVID-19. Iowa State University is offering a free 4-module program geared towards manufacturing and construction companies.

Webinars will cover: Employees in the pandemic era, personal hygiene and preparing the facility, PPE and training, supervisory response, communication strategy/policy.

Details and registration found at

<https://sh.ae.iastate.edu/>



## Iowa Students Receive Scholarships from the Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Council

Every year, the [Governor's Safety & Health Conference](#) awards three [academic scholarship awards](#) to Iowa students in occupational health and safety. This year, students from the University of Iowa and Iowa State University were presented with the 2020 scholarship awards.

### **Jack Beno Memorial Scholarship** **Nastaran Moradi, The University of Iowa**

Nastaran is pursuing a master's degree in Industrial Hygiene at the University of Iowa College of Public Health and is a trainee of the Heartland Center. She previously received a master's degree in environmental engineering where she researched methods to remediate nano-particle pollutions.

### **Bill Dickinson Scholarship** **Lindsay Heck, The University of Iowa**

Lindsay is pursuing a master's degree in Industrial Hygiene at the University of Iowa College of Public Health and is also a Heartland Center trainee. She completed her BS in Health & Wellness at Canisius College where she worked as a research assistant in clinical exercise programs for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

### **Iowa Occupational Safety & Health Advisory Council Scholarship** **Christian Feye, Iowa State University**

Christian graduated in December 2020 and plans to continue his education by attending the University of Iowa next fall to pursue a master's degree in the College of Public Health.

## Dr. Fredric Gerr Receives 2020 Distinguished Faculty Award

Dr. Fred Gerr has served as a professor in the University of Iowa Department of Occupational and Environmental Health for the last 18 years and has transitioned to professor emeritus in 2020. Dr. Gerr gave the Distinguished Faculty Lecture on December 2, 2020. The presentation was titled Meat Packing Plant Workers: A Case Study of a Precarious Workforce and gave an overview of both past and present occupational injury and illnesses faced by meat packing plant workers. You can read more and view a recording of the lecture on the [College of Public Health website](#).



## Continuing Education Programs

Check out the Heartland Center's online events calendar at [HeartlandERC.org](https://HeartlandERC.org) to keep track of our upcoming continuing education events.

Follow the Heartland Center on social media for regular occupational health and safety updates:

 **Facebook**  
[facebook.com/HeartlandCenterERC/](https://facebook.com/HeartlandCenterERC/)

 **Twitter**  
[twitter.com/heartlandcntr](https://twitter.com/heartlandcntr)

 **LinkedIn**  
[linkedin.com/groups/8420341](https://linkedin.com/groups/8420341)

 **Instagram**  
[instagram.com/heartlandcntr/](https://instagram.com/heartlandcntr/)

## Heartland Center Annual Report

Heartland Center trainees, faculty, and alumni have accomplished great things in the last year. Read about their research, achievements, COVID-19 responses, and where our students are now.

You can find the report on the [Heartland Center website](#).