

ERCs Partner to Offer Webinar Series on Human Factors and Ergonomics and Industrial Hygiene

July 14, 2022 by Mitchel Rosen and Michelle Meyer

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the NIOSH [Education and Research Centers \(ERC\)](#) which are extramurally funded university-based centers that carry out multidisciplinary education and research training activities and offer graduate and postgraduate training in the core and allied fields of occupational safety and health. The ERCs serve as a resource for our nation’s workforce through continuing education[1] and outreach. Together, the 18 ERC Continuing Education Programs provide critical knowledge and skills to tens of thousands of occupational safety and health professionals each year. The broad range of programs presented are designed to build capacity in occupational safety and health practitioners and researchers, leading to improvements in the safety, health, and well-being of the nation’s workforce. Between 2005 and 2020, the ERCs provided more than 3.8-million-person hours of training to more than 785,500 occupational safety and health professionals through more than 23,500 courses. The following table shows the continuing education activity by discipline.

Table. Continuing education courses by discipline, 2005-2020

| Discipline | Number of Courses | Number of Trainees | Person-Hours of Training |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Industrial Hygiene | 2,983 | 76,543 | 544,924 |
| Occupational Health Nursing | 2,925 | 98,473 | 458,301 |
| Occupational Medicine | 2,762 | 127,093 | 377,055 |
| Occupational Safety | 10,233 | 222,148 | 1,604,718 |
| Ag Safety and Health | 374 | 14,287 | 35,096 |
| Other | 4,228 | 247,045 | 852,694 |
| Total | 23,505 | 785,589 | 3,872,788 |

Launch of the ERC Webinar Series

In 2019, the ERC Continuing Education Programs came together to launch a webinar program to provide up-to-date information on critical health and safety issues. The first series developed was on [Human Factors and Ergonomics](#).

Musculoskeletal injuries are the leading cause of injury in the United States. In 2018, 30% of the 900,380 days away from work were MSD cases[2]. Most importantly, work-related MSDs can be prevented. In 2019, the ERC Human Factors and Ergonomics Webinar series launched to help mitigate avoidable workplace risk, and to increase access amongst health and safety professionals to cutting edge research and best practices being taught in colleges and universities throughout the country.

During its inaugural year, the ERC Human Factors and Ergonomics Webinar Series brought together 745 professionals across Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) disciplines to explore topics including: [Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders in Hotel Room Cleaners](#); [Vehicle Seat Design, Whole Body Vibration, and Low Back Pain](#); [Analysis of Work Tasks from a Cognitive Ergonomics Perspective](#); and more.

Given the success of the series, ERC Continuing Education Programs committed to grow the collaboration and launched the ERC [Industrial Hygiene Webinar Series](#) in 2020. Industrial hygiene is the science of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating, and

controlling workplace conditions that may cause workers' injury or illness[3]. This vital profession was thrust into the limelight on a national scale during the COVID-19 pandemic, with industrial hygiene professionals being called to identify and control inhalation and airborne exposures in the workplace, including schools, businesses, hospitals, and more. The industrial hygiene series served 1,456 participants in 2020 covering topics such as [biomonitoring and risk assessment](#), [direct reading instruments](#), [virus exposure among healthcare workers](#), and many more.

Each webinar focuses on specific topics in Industrial Hygiene and Human Factors and Ergonomics and is led by ERC faculty, alumni, and affiliates. To date, the ERC Webinar Series has provided 57 trainings, reaching 7,460 participants throughout the United States and abroad.

These webinars are a valuable resource to provide new research and practice in an easily assessable way to a wide audience. Feedback from participants indicates the webinars increased their knowledge in the topics presented. According to participants:

"I enjoy the webinars. I truly appreciate the effort in providing them."

"This was a very interesting webinar and I appreciate the diversity of topics presented."

"Thank you for organizing this webinar. Please continue to host these webinars to advance health, safety, and industrial hygiene professions."

"Keep up the great work and having enthused and knowledgeable presenters."

"Webinars are incredibly diverse, challenging to my knowledge and experiences."

"Keep it up! I really appreciate the short, focused, well-presented variety of topics."

The webinars are free, with the option to receive continuing education credit. Most webinars are recorded and hosted online for later viewing on [YouTube](#), and on the [Northern California ERC website](#), where you can find more information about the ERC webinars.

Upcoming webinars are listed below. You can find more information and register [here](#).

- 08/03/22: Ensuring Occupational Health Research Benefits All Workers: A Framework for Inclusive Research
- 08/09/22: Investigating Air Changes Per Hour: Outside Air, MERV, & HEPA – Does it Add Up?

Please feel free to submit a topic to be covered in a future webinar series in the comment section below. Additionally, if you're interested in presenting in the webinar series, please contact Michelle Meyer, mmeyer@berkeley.edu.

You can also sign up for our mailing list to receive announcements about upcoming ERC webinars by [clicking here](#).

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This blog is part of a [series](#) for the 45th ERC Anniversary. See the blog on [ERC training](#) and stay tuned for the upcoming ERC research blog.

References

[1] Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Number RFA-OH-22-001, November 17, 2021

[2] Occupational injuries and illnesses resulting in musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). May 2020
<https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/case/msds.htm>

[3] OSHA 3143 Informational Booklet on Industrial Hygiene, 1998. <https://www.osha.gov/publications/OSHA3143>

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[Education and Research Centers, NIOSH-funded Research](#)

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