



IH Interface: The ACGIH® Web Site

William J. Daniels

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William J. Daniels and Stanley A. Salisbury, Column Editors

Reported by William J. Daniels

As many of you are aware, the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) now has a world-wide web site at <http://www.ACGIH.org>. The site is an outstanding resource for both ACGIH members and others interested in the field of occupational safety and health. It provides instant world-wide access to many of the resources and services that ACGIH offers.

The establishment of the web site was a project of the ACGIH Computer Committee. In May 1995, a subcommittee, chaired by Dennis Morgan, U.S. Army, was appointed to arrive at options for the web site. Subcommittee members included Martin Abell and Tom Bloom, both of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and past committee member Richard Taft of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A presentation was made to the ACGIH board of directors in October 1995, at which time the project was accepted. In the following months plans for the web site were finalized, and in September 1996 the site was officially opened.

When first entering the web site, visitors are given choices of the 12 major topic areas of the web site (Figure 1). Before proceeding to the other pages, visitors should take note of the "Feedback" link on the home page. Clicking on this link brings up a form which allows members to notify ACGIH of any changes in address or other membership information. In addition, general comments can be submitted in this area by members and visitors alike.

The "Welcome" section of the web site provides a greeting from ACGIH chairman Roy Buchan, as well as the history and mission of ACGIH. The "Staff" link on the welcome page provides the visitor with the electronic mail (e-mail) addresses of the four key departmental staff groups of ACGIH: communications, publications, technical affairs, and membership. Clicking on these addresses with virtually any web browser

will allow the user to immediately send an e-mail message to any of these groups. There is also a link in the "Welcome" page which provides information on the location of the ACGIH headquarters office. Reflecting the global nature of the world-wide web, a series of five maps are provided, beginning with a map of the United States and ending with a detailed street map of the area.

The "Applied" section of the web site provides visitors with an overview of the ACGIH journal, *Applied Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, and a listing of editorial board members. Detailed instructions for authors wishing to submit manuscripts are also provided. For those wanting information on journal content, an index section provides information on obtaining the 10-year index for the journal. This index is available on disk or hard copy, and a link to the on-line order form is included. For the most current journal information, a listing of articles scheduled to appear in several upcoming issues is also provided. Those in need of Certification Maintenance (CM) points might be particularly interested in the "Action Level" link. The Action Level, the journal's at-home continuing education program, is explained in detail, and visitors can sign up for the program directly from this site and begin earning CM points or Continuance of Certification (CoC) points right away.

The "Members" section of the web site provides the visitor with various demographic profiles of ACGIH members. Visitors who are not yet ACGIH members can read about the many benefits of membership and descriptions of the various types of membership which are linked directly to application forms. A key feature of this section is a searchable membership directory which lists members' names and their geographic locations. Members may modify their profile to include other personal data and e-mail addresses by clicking on "Change Membership Profile" and entering their name and password. Passwords are originally set to the ACGIH membership number (found in the annual membership Directory and Information Guide), but can be

changed once you enter the membership profile form. However, members wishing to report changes in their address or membership status should use the previously discussed "Feedback" form found on the home page.

The "Leaders" section of the web site provides the makeup of the ACGIH board and a listing of the various committees. Within each committee link is a description of its mission, current work plan, and membership roster.

The "Catalog" page of the web site provides categorical indexing and free form searching of the over 350 publications offered by ACGIH. Descriptions and pricing information are provided for each publication with a link to an on-line order form to allow for instant ordering of publications. The catalog will provide an up-to-the-minute listing of publications, a feature that is not possible with a hard-copy publications catalog. New publications will be immediately added to the site upon technical review and acceptance by ACGIH.

A related area, the "Free" section of the web site, provides descriptions and downloadable demonstration copies of CD-ROMs and software available through ACGIH. Available CD-ROM demos include ACGIH's CD ROM of TLVs and other occupational exposure values and the CCINFO series of health and safety CD ROMs from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Examples of software demos include the IH Calculator software and Quick Guide, a computerized version of the NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards.

Most members are familiar with *Today!*, the newsletter published eight times a year which provides information and news from ACGIH. The "Today!" section of the web site will make this even more timely. Condensed versions of many of the articles from *Today!* will be posted here before the newsletter arrives in the mail. Notice of new ACGIH membership services and publications will also appear here.

The latest information on upcoming conferences, seminars, training courses, and other special events sponsored by ACGIH can be found in the "Events"



FIGURE 1. The ACGIH web site home page.

section of the web site. To save time in hunting down and mailing hard copies of registration forms and help to meet pre-registration deadlines, you can often register directly from this page.

A particularly interesting feature of the ACGIH web site is "OH Talk." This is a service provided by ACGIH to allow concerned individuals to pose, answer, or discuss scientific or technical questions and issues related to occupational health and safety. The "OH Talk" section is divided into three subsections dealing with recognition, evaluation, and control. Visitors can post questions in the appropriate area and, when possible,

share their expertise by providing information or solutions. They can choose to use their name, use a nickname, or remain anonymous. The intent of this section is to address technical and scientific questions, not to discuss the broader policy issues of occupational safety and health.

The ACGIH web site also provides a valuable "Link" page where the visitor can connect to other web sites offering information useful to occupational safety and health professionals. These include NIOSH, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the U.S. EPA, the National Institutes of Health, the

U.S. Army Industrial Hygiene Program, the International Labor Organization, and the World Health Organization, to name a few.

Finally, a "Sponsors" page allows suppliers of occupational safety and health products and services to provide information on their products and to set up links directly to their sites. Interested parties should contact ACGIH to place an advertisement on this page.

ACGIH's goal is to provide the products and services members need to continually improve the organization. The launching of the web site is a giant step toward achieving this goal.