



A Worker Dialogue

Improving Health, Safety and Security at the U.S. Department of Energy



In an ongoing effort to engage unions around worker safety improvements at Department of Energy (DOE) sites, the Office of Health, Safety, and Security (HSS) is partnering with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to conduct a *Worker Dialogue* in which workers will be invited to participate in open, online discussions regarding their health and safety experiences at DOE sites.

Section 1. Questions & Answers about the Worker Dialogue

Purpose and Expected Outcome of the Worker Dialogue

1. Who is NAPA and why is DOE partnering with them for this Dialogue?

The National Academy of Public Administration is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of top public management and organizational leaders, chartered by Congress, who tackle the nation's most critical and complex challenges. As the home of The Collaboration Project, the National Academy has developed an expertise in online Dialogues, which are similar to online town halls, and thus is uniquely positioned to host this discussion.

HSS has partnered with the National Academy to host an online dialogue among members of labor unions and organizations who work at DOE sites. HSS believes that because of their reputation, the National Academy will be viewed as an independent, neutral host for this engagement.

2. What is the expected outcome or result of this dialogue?

The aim of this Dialogue is to harness the “wisdom of the crowd” and provide the HSS leadership with a set of actionable ideas and feedback to inform recommendations for policy changes within DOE. The National Academy will issue a report from our Panel of Fellows that contains lessons learned and recommendations on next steps for HSS and DOE to consider in the area of worker safety, health, and training programs. This report will be released to the public and available on NAPA's website. HSS expects that such a report will be highly informative and consequential because the findings and recommendations are based on the thousands of voices from the front-line workers.

3. How is this different from other forums, like the HSS Focus Group, where worker safety and security issues have already been reported?

Although the Focus Group forums have been beneficial in identifying cross-cutting safety issues of concern, as well as establishing working relationships between HSS and union leadership, this Dialogue presents a way to reach and amplify the collective voices of front-line workers and dig deeper into these issues. It balances management perspectives with a grassroots initiative and their perspectives.

4. What sort of input are you seeking? Why is HSS pursuing this particular approach to discuss worker health and safety issues?

We are asking DOE's front-line workers to contribute their best ideas, provide feedback, and share their experiences on issues related to workforce safety. In particular, we are looking for input in five key areas:

- Worker Safety Training
- Standardize Worker Safety Training Requirements
- Implementation of the Worker Safety and Health Program (10CFR851 Rule)
- Workforce Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer
- Your Personal Experience with Workplace Safety and Health

This effort is based on the idea that “none of us is as smart as all of us combined”. HSS is pursuing this particular approach because it is an open, collaborative way to bring together a community of workers that is otherwise geographically dispersed and difficult to convene at one place. This forum will allow this community to share their first hand knowledge and ideas with one another and most importantly, with HSS. In this way, the Dialogue is *more* than a survey—workers will be sharing their ideas with one another in free discussion, instead of answering closed-ended questions. In addition, this approach is not resource-intensive for the participants.

Additional information on each of these areas can be found in Section 2 of this document. Please **note the Worker Dialogue is NOT a safety reporting system. Safety issues and occurrences must be reported through appropriate DOE designated systems (e.g., ORPS, CAIRS, etc.)**

5. Has this type of dialogue been done before in government?

Yes. Other federal agencies have successfully used this platform to engage their workers and stakeholders on a wide variety of topics. Recent examples include the Recovery Dialogue on IT Solutions, in which citizens contributed ideas on Recovery.gov website functionality; the Transportation Security Administration's Idea Factory, where workers discussed ways to improve airport security operations; and Department of Transportation's United We Ride Dialogue – where the public discussed ways to increase access to affordable public transportation.

Role of Workers and Union Reps in this Dialogue

6. Who should participate in this dialogue?

All workers and union leaders from across the DOE complex are invited and encouraged to participate.

7. How long will this dialogue be available?

The Dialogue will be open 24/7 for four weeks beginning at 9:00 AM EDT on Monday, June 14, 2010 and will close at 11:59 PM EDT on Sunday, July 11, 2010. Because the discussion will develop over the course of this four week period, we encourage participants to come back to the site several times to see what new ideas and discussions have been taking place.

8. How do I use the Dialogue site?

The Worker Dialogue discussion website permits users to do the following:

- Submit an idea in response to some general discussion questions (see Section 2)
- Comment on another user's idea

- Rate another worker's idea
- Find ideas and suggestions that matter to you
- "Tag" key words and themes so that themes and topics can be easily identified
- "Follow" ideas and members that they find interesting

A first-time visitor to the site will be asked to register and provide answers to a few brief demographic questions which will allow us to better understand the makeup of participants. Responses to these questions will not be visible to any other user, and the National Academy will not share this information. Return visitors will simply log into their account before they are allowed to engage in the discussion.

9. How often do I need to participate?

Users can spend as much time on the dialogue as they like, suggesting new ideas and commenting and rating the ideas of others. At minimum, we would ask workers to take 30 minutes to visit the site. Ideally, participants should check back on the site during the four weeks of the dialogue to re-engage in the evolving discussions. Come early and come often!

10. What do the union members need in regard to equipment and time in order to participate in this dialogue?

All workers will need to participate is a computer with Internet access. The Dialogue is hosted online and will be accessible from either home or work.

11. I am a union representative -- Can I submit comments on behalf of the group of workers that I represent?

Participants are welcome to explain in their ideas and comments that they speak on behalf of a group; however, their ideas and comments will not automatically receive extra weight or be clearly identified as a group's comment. The success of this Dialogue depends on the participation of many, and the discussion builds as individual ideas are enhanced and voted on by other participants. The Dialogue platform is intuitive to use and participants are offered a variety of ways to engage based on their comfort level. Therefore, the best way to make a group's voice heard is to recruit as many members of that group to participate on the dialogue.

12. As a union leader, how can I help get the word out to ensure my workers participate?

Union leaders can ensure the Dialogue's success by encouraging participation by word of mouth, by email messages and phone calls, and in meetings. Specifically, the National Academy is asking unions to help with outreach in one of two ways:

- 1) By Sharing their contact lists with the National Academy, who will include the emails their outreach strategy, or
- 2) By designating a point of contact that can assist the Academy in forwarding outreach emails to the union workers and encourage them to get online early and often.

The National Academy will not share any contact information you provide with HSS, DOE, or any other outside party.

13. Is there a way to find out during the course of the Dialogue what the participation rate is for my workers?

After the dialogue begins, the National Academy can provide union leaders with the number of

registered users from each union. The National Academy, as a trusted third party, will not share the names or email addresses of participants who have signed up for the Dialogue.

Protecting Your Identification during the Dialogue

14. Will my personal information be protected? Can other users find out who I am?

The National Academy is hosting this Dialogue as an independent third party. Therefore, all the information gathered from users will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with DOE, unions, contractors, or any other party. This data will only be reported to DOE in aggregate totals. For example, the National Academy will only report that 99 users registered from Union X; the Academy will not report specific users or email addresses, nor will it report that a certain individual from Union X had made a certain specific comment.

In addition, participation in the Dialogue is anonymous, and users will not be able to be identified by their ideas and comments. When users register, they will create a custom username that can be as anonymous as they would like (e.g., SuperMan123). Registration does require users to submit an email address and answer a few demographic questions about their work with DOE. These pieces of information will **not** be visible to any other user on the site.

15. Can anyone in the general public see or use this forum?

No. The website www.workerdialogue.org will be password-protected, and the password will only be shared with unions and workers in the DOE system to ensure only members of this community can access or contribute to the discussion. Outreach emails to these groups will contain the site password, which users will need to enter each time they visit the website. After entering this password, users will be able to see all ideas and comments in the dialogue—however, they must create an account in order to submit any ideas, comments, or votes of their own.

16. Will this dialogue be monitored to ensure that no one is posting anything offensive or off-topic?

The National Academy will moderate the Dialogue continuously according to a moderation policy posted on the site. Posts made to the site are done in real time (i.e. comments will be posted without prior moderator approval). Any post that contains profanity, threats, or personally-identifiable information will be removed. In addition, all users will be able to easily “flag” other ideas and comments to the attention of the moderator that they feel are in violation of this policy.

17. Who at NAPA can I contact with additional questions?

For questions or assistance, contact Danielle Germain (dgermain@napawash.org) or Daniel Honker (202.204.3633, dhonker@napawash.org) at the National Academy of Public Administration.

Section 2. Forum Topics and Questions

The following topic categories and questions were derived from the past several years of discussion with union representatives who have identified these as mutual issues and areas of concern across the DOE complex. Each of these categories will have its own forum on the Dialogue site. The questions and contextual information will be provided as background information for participants.

1. Improving Worker Safety Training

The Department of Energy recognizes that no one understands how to improve DOE worker health and safety better than the frontline workers themselves. It is deeply important to the Department that it does all it can to keep its frontline workers safe.

- a. How can DOE improve worker safety training at its facilities to ensure the training is relevant and thorough?
- b. In your view, what safety training programs should be made mandatory for workers at all DOE sites?
- c. How can we make the training process more efficient?

2. Standardizing Worker Safety Training Requirements

Different DOE facilities may have different training requirements for performing identical tasks. In addition, there are different procedures among DOE sites for verifying workers' training certifications.

- a. How can DOE ensure that safety training programs across DOE facilities are consistent?
- b. What ideas do you have for keeping workers current on safety refresher training?
- c. How can DOE ensure that workers' training certifications can easily move with them from one DOE site to another?

3. Implementing the Worker Safety and Health Program (10CFR851 Rule)

To reduce or prevent occupational injuries, illnesses, and accidents, the 10CFR851 rule establishes the framework for a worker protection program by requiring DOE contractors to provide their employees with safe and healthful workplaces. The 851 Rule also establishes procedures for investigating whether a requirement has been violated, for determining the nature and extent of violations, and for imposing an appropriate remedy and/or violation penalty. [A link will be provided to [a list of worker safety activities required by the 851 Rule.](#)]

- a. What ideas do you have for improving how the 10CFR851 Rule is implemented?
- b. Since the implementation of the 10CFR851 Rule, what impact has it had on safety at your site?
- c. What aspects of the Rule have proven most effective and necessary, and what can be improved?

4. Workforce Succession Planning and Knowledge Transfer

Seventy-six million baby boomers will leave the workforce over the next 10-20 years. This is an unprecedented change in the nation's workforce. Studies project that younger generations will be more mobile throughout their careers (moving more frequently between employers and work locations) compared to previous generations.

- a) In your view, what steps should DOE take to ensure that knowledge and skills are transferred to the next generation of workers?

5. Your Personal Experience with Workplace Safety and Health

Your personal experience with safety issues can provide valuable insight into how programs should be improved or maintained. Please share any personal experiences you have had that would demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs.

- a) What worker training programs have you found to be especially worthwhile? If possible, please provide course name(s), training location and training provider.
- b) What specific hazards have you encountered at a DOE facility that require better training, analysis, identification, etc.?
- c) What other personal experiences you have had related to worker safety that could help DOE better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current safety programs?

Section 3. Forum Registration Questions

Dialogue participants will need to register with the website before using this Dialogue. This section shows general registration questions relating to worker demographics to help the analysts understand the background of Dialogue participants. The registration information will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with DOE, unions, contractors, or any other party. This data will only be reported to DOE in aggregate totals. In addition, participation in the Dialogue is anonymous, and users will not be able to be identified by their ideas and comments. When users register, they will create a custom username that can be as anonymous as they would like (e.g., SuperMan123). Registration does require users to submit an email address and answer a few demographic questions about their work with DOE. These pieces of information will not be visible to any other user on the site.

(* = Required)

1. Username*

2. Password*

3. Email address*

4. Zip code: (numerical entry)*

5. Union/Organization Name (For example, “USW”, “Electrical Workers” or “IBEW”, “IAFF”, “Chemical Workers”, etc.) (text entry)*

6. Are you currently working at a DOE site? If not, when were you last working at a DOE site? (Drop-down list – select one)*

- I currently work at a DOE site
- I last worked at a DOE site within the past year
- I last worked at a DOE site between 1-3 years ago
- I last worked at a DOE site between 4-8 years ago
- I last worked at a DOE site more than 9 years ago

7. Current DOE site (or most recent DOE site, if not currently working at one) (drop-down list – select one)*

- Acid/Pueblo Canyon Site, Los Alamos, NM
- Amchitka Site, Amchitka, AK
- Ames Laboratory, Ames, IA
- Argonne National Lab - East, Argonne, IL
- Argonne National Laboratory – West, Idaho Falls, ID
- Battelle King Avenue, Columbus, OH
- Battelle West Jefferson, Columbus, OH
- Bayo Canyon Site, Los Alamos, NM
- Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, NY
- Brush LuckeyPlant, Luckey, OH
- Carlsbad Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, NM
- DOE Headquarters (Washington DC region)
- East Tennessee Technology Park, Oak Ridge, TN
- Energy Technology Engineering Center, Ventura County, CA
- Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, Batavia, IL
- Fernald, Hamilton, OH
- G.E. Evendale, Evendale, OH
- G.E. Vallecitos Nuclear Center, Livermore, CA
- HAMMER Training and Education Center, Hanford, WA
- Hanford Site, Hanford, WS
- Huntington Pilot Plant, Huntington, WV
- Idaho National Laboratory, Idaho Falls, ID

- Inhalation Toxicology Research Institute, Albuquerque, NM
- Kansas City Plant, Kansas City, MO
- Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, Berkeley, CA
- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA
- Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, NM
- Moab (UMTRA Project), Moab, UT
- Mound, OH
- National Energy Technology Laboratory, Albany, OR
- National Energy Technology Laboratory, Fairbanks, AK
- National Energy Technology Laboratory, Morgantown, WV
- National Energy Technology Laboratory, Pittsburgh, PA
- National Energy Technology Laboratory, Tulsa, OK
- National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Golden, CO
- Nevada Test Site, Las Vegas, NV
- NNSA Service Center, Albuquerque, NM
- Oak Ridge National Lab, Oak Ridge, TN
- Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Richland, WA
- Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Paducah, KY
- Pantex Plant, Amarillo, TX
- Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Portsmouth, OH
- Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, Princeton, NJ
- Rocky Flats, Denver, CO
- Sandia National Laboratory, Albuquerque, NM
- Savannah River Site, Aiken, SC
- SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Palo Alto, CA
- South Valley Superfund Site, Albuquerque, NM
- Southwest Experimental Fast Oxide Reactor, Strickler, AR
- Southwestern Power Administration, Tulsa, OK
- (Same as SLAC) Strategic Petroleum Reserve, (Bryan Mound, TX; Big Hill, TX; West Hackberry, LA; Bayou Choctaw, LA; Richton, MS)
- Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility, Newport News, VA
- Tonopah Test Range, Tonopah, NV
- Weldon Springs, Weldon Springs, MO
- West Valley Demonstration Project, West Valley, NY
- Western Area Power Administration, Lakewood, CO
- Y-12, Oak Ridge, TN
- Yucca Mountain, Nye County, NV
- Other (please specify)

8. Are you currently assigned to work at this particular DOE site for at least 50 percent of your time, or do you move between multiple sites, whether within the DOE system or outside of it? (checkboxes – select one)

- I am currently assigned to work at this particular DOE site for at least 50 percent of my time.
- I move between multiple DOE sites
- I move between DOE and non-DOE sites
- I am not currently working at a DOE site

9. Trades and Job Categories* – Select a trade from one of the following categories that best fit your duties and job functions. If you perform multiple trades, use the “Multiple Classification” category below. Please note that certain trades (e.g., electrician, machinists, pipefitters, demolition, etc.) are listed under both “Production” and “Construction” categories.

Production Trades (drop-down list – Select one)

- chemical worker
- electrician
- hazardous materials worker
- HAZMAT trainer
- heavy equipment operator / engineer
- machinist

- pipefitter
- plumber
- radiation worker
- steel worker
- welder
- other (please specify): _____

Construction Trades (drop-down list – Select one)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • bricklayer | • cement mason |
| • carpenter | • painter |
| • ceiling /partition fixer | • pipefitter |
| • cladder | • plasterer |
| • demolitions worker | • plumber |
| • electrician | • power float / concrete finisher |
| • forklift operator | • riveter |
| • foundry worker | • roofer |
| • gas approved plumber | • sheet metal worker |
| • heavy equipment operator / engineer | • steel worker |
| • HVAC installer, servicer | • teamster/ truck driver |
| • iron worker | • tool and die maker |
| • joiner | • welder |
| • laborer | • other (please specify) : _____ |
| • machinist | |

First Responders (drop-down list – Select one)

- police and security worker
- firefighter
- medical worker
- hazardous materials worker
- other (please specify) : _____

Multiple Classification (You perform multiple tasks/trades and do not fit in one category above. For example you are a chemical specialist working on demolition, decommission, and decontamination projects)

Brief Description (text entry): _____

10a. Are you a journeyman or apprentice (check box, select one)*

- Apprentice
- Journeyman

10b. Years experience in this trade (drop-down list, select one)*

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years

- 21+ years

11. What level of workplace hazard do you face while performing your job?* (either drop-down list or checkboxes, whichever is easier for developers – select one)

- low hazard level
- medium hazard level
- high hazard level

SAMPLE