



IAQ RADIO+

Show Number: 743 BLOG

Chris Laszcz-Davis - OHTA

Chelsea Earhart - BGC

Larry Sloan – AIHA

Dr. Albert J. Tien- WHWB-US

### Global Environmental Health & Safety A New Pathway for CIH Accreditation

Good day and welcome to IAQ Radio+ episode 743 blog. This week we welcomed Chris Laszcz-Davis – OHTA Chelsea Earhart – BGC,, Larry Sloan – AIHA and Dr. Albert Tien -WHWB-US to talk about global worker health and the new Global Pathway for CIH Accreditation.

Workplace safety and occupational illness are challenges globally. This week we focused on organizations involved in occupational health and worker safety internationally and their new collaboration for educating and mentoring global EH&S professionals. The panel discussed their innovative solutions they are using to share their knowledge and expertise through training courses internationally making them available in areas where there are few available resources.

#### Our Panelists:

Dr. Albert Tien is the Managing Partner for 2TSustainAbility. He is also a two-time President and one of the founding members of Workplace Health Without Borders (US). Dr. Tien holds a PhD Biotechnology from Swiss Federal Institute of Technology; he also was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Oakridge Institute for Science and Engineering. His MS degree in Life Sciences was from New Mexico Highlands University and his undergraduate work was at Tulane University in Biological Chemistry. He is an alumnus of the International Management Development (IMD) and St. Gallen Business schools.

Lawrence Sloan serves as CEO of the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA). Before this, he served as CEO at SOCMA, a trade association representing the US specialty chemical industry. He began his career as a chemical engineer at Air Products. Mr. Sloan earned a BS in chemical engineering from the University of

Pennsylvania and an MBA from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management.

**Chris Laszcz-Davis**, MS, CIH, FAIHA, FAIC is the Founder & President of The Environmental Quality Organization (EQO) LLC. She has over forty (40) years of executive, operational and technical management experience, including a role as a former Corporate Vice-President, Occupational & Environmental Health, Safety, Product Stewardship and Operational Integrity for the global Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation. Prior to industry, Chris worked for the US Department of Energy (DOE) in both Washington DC and on the west coast and for the University of California Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories. Chris is presently Co-Chair of the global Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA). She has the dubious distinction of having been a Board member or President of every major US based Industrial hygiene organization (American Academy of Industrial Hygiene, national AIHA, BGC (formerly ABIH) and ACGIH. Chris earned her undergraduate (BS) in Chemistry and Biology from Notre Dame College, followed by her MS in Environmental Health from the University of Minnesota Graduate School of Public Health.

Chelsea Earhart, MBA, CAE, ICE-CCP is the Executive Director of The Board for Global EHS Credentialing (BGC®). Over the past 22 years, Chelsea Earhart has served as the certification / accreditation departments of associations representing diverse professions and industries. She has also helped many certification and licensure organizations create and implement exams and examination programs.

**As our listening audience is familiar with the AIHA, here is background information on the other organizations.**

**IOHA (International Industrial Hygiene Association, <https://www.ioha.net/>),** was established to improve, promote and develop occupational hygiene worldwide through its member organizations, and to improve and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for all.

From its creation in 1987, IOHA has grown to 42 member organizations, representing over 20,000 occupational hygienists worldwide. IOHA provides an international voice of the occupational hygiene profession through its recognition as a non-governmental organization (NGO) by both the ILO (International Labor Organization) and WHO (World Health Organization). The IOHA meets on a triannual basis. The most recent meeting was hosted in Ireland, where a

serendipitous discussion between Larry Sloan and Chris Laszcz-Davis on a shuttle bus resulted in the partnership we are discussing today.

At the IOHA 2024 Awards Ceremony, OHTA was presented with the 2024 IOHA Collaboration Award in honor of its profound commitment to improving worker health and promoting occupational hygiene on a global scale.

OHTA Co-Chairs, Chris Laszcz-Davis and Steven Verpaele, accepted the award on behalf of OHTA and they shared their views on OHTA's trajectory, impact, vision and future opportunities in the following video which can be viewed on the OHTA YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/AUAP9DbizK4>

***Chris, what does the abbreviation OHTA stand for?*** Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA is headquartered the UK).

### ***What is OHTA?***

OHTA was constituted in 2009 as a not-for-profit organization with a mission to provide consistent, quality training on the core aspects of occupational hygiene (also known as industrial hygiene) and related health and safety topics. OHTA is a global organization of volunteers with approved trainers, national associations and corporate sponsors who all share a passion in making a difference in the health and safety of workers in both underserved and developed countries.

### ***Why Was OHTA Formed?***

Occupational injuries and illnesses continue to be a widespread international problem. Data from Lloyd and Gallup in 2019 indicated that there are 340 million occupational accidents and 160 million work-related illnesses each year. A significant contributor to this problem is the lack of adequately trained occupational hygienists to recognize, evaluate and control workplace hazards. This pressing need contributed to the 2009 launch of OHTA.

***What are the Goals of OHTA?*** The number one priority of OHTA is to make low-cost, world-class courses available to OH practitioners and students in underserved areas. But we also have OHTA trainers in developed countries. Our ultimate goal is to increase the number and competency of occupational hygienists throughout the world, thereby improving worker health, one course at a time.

***What Does OHTA Offer?*** Training materials are developed and maintained by OHTA volunteer teams who are internationally recognized experts in their subject area. Student manuals can be downloaded for free once you create an account on the

website at <https://ohtatraining.org/>. Training courses are available from OHTA approved trainers who are typically OH consultants or national OH associations. As part of our qualification framework, OHTA offers an ICertOHTA certificate in occupational hygiene to those students who have successfully completed exams for 6 of the OHTA500 series course. Exams are multiple-choice, open-book. The ICert Certificates are accepted prerequisites for the CIH designation.

***Additional Comments by Chris:***

- There are 340 million workplace accidents and 160 million incidents of workplace illness annually.
- Many of our more recent requests for training come from India, Africa, the Middle East and Indonesia. OHTA often works through its many connections, some of whom are the national associations.
- OHTA develops student modules and extensive training materials for instructors to deliver courses internationally.
- Expansion=increased impact as effective change agents=Success
- Online students have expressed a need for additional case studies and practicals, both of which OHTA is integrating into its online offerings. Our biggest strength is the incredible network of qualified volunteers who are experienced practitioners with an ability to deliver “boots on the ground” knowledge.
- A major benefit of the international training courses is that the recipients (whether professional occupational health and safety practitioners, occupational physicians, operational managers, or other) readily become change agents.
- Recognizing the strength of teaching and learning in one’s native tongue, OHTA has already (since the start of 2024) translated four of the 200-page student manuals and online exams into Turkish, Indonesian, French and Spanish (all at the request of the national associations). Other requests continue to come in.
- The CIH professional designation is one that many at our international conferences have expressed as being very desirable. The OHTA training, along with completion of an ICertOHTA, is a strong starting point in the trajectory towards a CIH.

**WHWB-US (Workplace Health Without Borders US Chapter)** is an independent branch of WHWB, an international charity based in Canada. We leverage partnerships and build connections between communities, local organizations and stakeholders, academics and researchers, non-profits, and industry.

Together with our international branches, we have a network of nearly 1000 people around the world including occupational hygienists, epidemiologists, nurses, physicians, and others concerned about global workplace health.

***Additional comments from Albert:***

- WHWB-US was incorporated in September 2015 with a mission to:
  - Raise awareness of the need for effective control of workplace hazards and risks for our own underserved workers and communities as well as in developing countries.
  - Provide coordination and oversight for projects and training initiated by WHWB-US
  - Access resources for both national and international projects which may be more accessible by nonprofits incorporated in the US
- WHWB-US is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization purposefully located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Because it was at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) that Professor Dr Warren Cook did pioneering work and writing on the subject of exposure limits.  
[https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/91923/Cummings\\_paperSL.pdf?sequence=1](https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/91923/Cummings_paperSL.pdf?sequence=1)
- After seeing OHTA's training materials and using them in Vietnam, Albert wanted to get involved and later became Co-chair of the OHTA Advisory Committee to help improve training materials and get feedback from students and training providers.
- Projects to help spread OHS knowledge to underserved populations include the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) with SUNY (State University of New York) and Vietnam National University thanks in part to WHWB-US Members especially Dr. Mary O'Reilly and Dr Hien Ngo.
- Many recent WHWB-US Projects have been undertaken in Viet Nam which include setting up H&S curriculum in various Vietnamese colleges and supporting International OH&S conferences by providing funding, volunteers to review submissions and session chairs as former WHWB-US President Tuan Ngyen is also an AIHA Ambassador to Vietnam. Other ongoing projects have also been undertaken in Ethiopia with the Wolaita Sodo University (WSU) thank to Dr. Yesuneh Chernet. Collaboration with Ethiopia has inherent challenges: low internet band width and political instability. We developed a 5-year plan for the University on how to harness our relationship to help the local industries and national institutions and are helping to develop a mandatory OH&S course that all WSU students will be required to take which

may be the only OH&S training they will have when they enter the local workforce.

- With regards to the new pathway to CIH accreditation, WHWB-US role is to provide mentors to help students who have completed the iCertOHTA trainings prepare for CIH exam. Our requirements are that the students are vetted by the OHTA Secretariat for the following: candidates have the iCertOHTA certificate, have a college degree in the sciences or engineering and have 5 years relevant work experience. Once vetted, the OHTA Secretariat helps students contact AIHA for a special code to receive licensed CIH review course material from AIHA at a generously discounted fee. WHWB-US provides partial or total funding for low-income students to purchase the CIH review material and register for the CIH exam. We will help accepted students through the whole process of studying and applying to take the CIH exam provided by BGC.
- WHWB-US looks at all venues for fundraising. WHWB-US receives funding from multiple sources including AIHA International microgrants, support from WHWB chapters. See [www.whwb-usa.org](http://www.whwb-usa.org) for more information.

**Board for Global EHS Credentialing (BGC®)** Established in 1960 as the American Board of Industrial Hygiene (ABIH) with one credentialing program, our independent non-profit 501(c)(6) organization has grown to become the Board for Global EHS Credentialing (BGC®) with multiple credentialing programs designed to protect human health, safety, and the environment.

BGC is the premier global credentialing body for professionals who protect and enhance the health, safety, and environment of people at work and in their communities. Our rigorous, reliable, and valid credentialing process elevates the expectations of professionals who work in the environment, health, and safety (EHS) fields and allows them to demonstrate their commitment and ability to work at the highest level.

***Additional comments from Chelsea:***

- The CIH is currently the BGC's flagship credential. The CIH was BGC's first credential.
- The first CIH course was taught in 1963.
- 13,000 people have attained the CIH of which 7-8K are currently active.
- BGC offers additional credentials in H&S.

- The CIH designation is important so employers in foreign countries can hire H&S professionals with training they can rely on.
- CIH Concentration by country: USA and Territories, Canada, China (Mainland), Singapore, India, Australia, South Korea, Malaysia, China (Taiwan), Saudi Arabia. These are in order.
- Currently the CIH exam is only given in English. GBC is working on CIH exam translations.
- Less than 10 countries have their own CIH equivalent courses.
- European Network of Safety & Health Professionals Organizations, GBC is an associate member <https://www.enshpo.eu/>
- GBC is working on having CIHs written into laws, rules and regulations both domestically and internationally.
- GBC relies upon industry experts to develop questions. Using psychometrics psychometricians ensure that the exam questions are unaffected by culture or bias. The exam is refreshed annually. The CIH exam undergoes a job analysis every five years to ensure that the exam covers what knowledge and skills are needed by CIHs in the field.
- For CIH testing, GBC uses Pearson Vue because they have testing centers worldwide. Testing with secure remote proctors is another option.

### ***Comments from Larry:***

- Collaborative committed to global community of IHs
- CIH course applicants are vetted to confirm that they meet the required criteria. After enrollment, students have 6 months to finish the course. A synchronous online CIH training course has been licensed from the course developer. The course is 24 hours long. The course is divided into modules. Each module has a quiz. Quizlet flashcards are included to help students prepare. The course has an 180 question practice exam.
- AIHA is agnostic regarding the available CIH prep courses.
- AIHA was approached to send a delegation to Viet Nam. The AIHA delegation was issued cultural visas for the trip. The trip was coordinated to coincide with a Vietnamese H&S conference.
- Here is a link to the CIH Crash Course offered through AIHA: <https://www.aiha.org/education/elearning/online-courses/cih-crash-course>  
AIHA is offering ~ 50% discount off list price to graduates of the iCertoHTA program. Note the discounted price is NOT publicly available.

## Round-Up & Final Comments

**Albert-** *From what country do you wish for more buy in on H&S?* The US, while we have lots of laws and regulations, many companies don't want to follow them if it entails additional costs. Sectors which often don't have the resources to comply are agriculture (migrant workers), landscaping, warehousing, mom and pop's etc.

**Larry-** I'm delighted with the partnership. AIHA is agnostic as to which CIH prep courses students use.

To learn more about IOHA, visit <https://www.ioha.net/>

To learn more about WHWB-US, visit <https://whwb-USA.org/>

To learn more about OHTA, visit <https://ohtatraining.org/>

**Chris-** I worked 25 years in industry and found that the change agents are often the plant operators and plant administrators facing prominent local issues. It's important that operations and communities' training/education also become part of our stakeholder vision and deliverables.

**Chelsea-** GBC has 2 new credentials: Certified Associate in Environment, Safety, and Health, Certified Professional in Environment, Safety, and Health

**Z-Man signing off**

**TRIVIA**

In what year was the first Certified Industrial Hygiene examination administered?

**Answer: 1963**

**Answered by:**

Robert Skoglund, Covestro