New Movie Available – Why Pursue the CIH Certification?

Do you know any occupational hygiene professionals who aren’t certified? Often, all it takes is a word of encouragement to motivate the person towards achieving the CIH. In fact, Diplomates make the best ambassadors because they have street cred.

Sometimes though, it is not easy to explain why a person would pursue a voluntary professional certification, let alone one as difficult as the CIH. To help, ABIH has released a new 3.5-minute movie targeted to non-certified professionals.

The movie will help everyone consistently communicate our value proposition of increased professional credibility, personal satisfaction and a competitive edge for job placement and advancement. To be clear, the movie doesn’t address the increased value that a CIH brings to the workplace but that will be the focus of future efforts by ABIH.

The CIH certification has been the global gold standard for more than 50 years. The requirements for education, experience and examination are rigorous and some of the toughest in the industry. While other certifications have relaxed their programs, the CIH has continued to set high standards so that only the best occupational hygienists achieve the CIH.
New Orientation Program
– Get Started On the Right Foot

The 5-year Certification Maintenance (CM) program has many rules and nuances and new CIHs often approach the first cycle with some trepidation, not quite confident that they have mastered it all.

To help new CIHs get started, ABIH is now providing an optional 1-hour orientation program. The program addresses Basic CM Rules; How to Earn CM Credit; Best Practices; Common Mistakes, and Useful Resources.

All new CIHs were sent an email sign-up invitation but if you have misplaced yours or simply need another, contact Tracy Parsons (tparsons@abih.org). Sessions will continue to run through the end of July.

At this time, the program is open only to new CIHs who passed the spring 2012 exam but if you feel that you would benefit from this type of information, please contact Tracy. ABIH wants to stay responsive to the needs of all CIHs, not just our newest Diplomates.

Roger Smith, CIH Joins ABIH Staff

Roger L. Smith, CIH, CHMM has recently joined ABIH as the Certification Application Manager, with responsibilities for new application review and approval, outreach to attract potential CIH candidates, and University relations. Roger brings over 30 years of experience in industrial manufacturing, research and development laboratories, IAQ, process risk assessment, leading H&S and Industrial Hygiene teams, and technical program development and implementation. He is a Certified Industrial Hygienist and a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager. He graduated from the University of Central Missouri with a MS degree in Industrial Hygiene. Roger can be reached at rsmith@abih.org, 517.321.2638, x5765, via Skype (Roger-Smith), or via LinkedIn. Please join us in welcoming Roger to the ABIH community.
Will You Be There?

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) Fall Conference, formerly known as the PCIH, will be in San Antonio, Texas, **October 27-31, 2012**.

San Antonio has an exciting array of things to do! With its vibrant culture, historical sites and friendly residents, you won’t want to miss this opportunity to visit!

The Fall Conference focuses on four themes: Exposure Risk Assessment and Management (ERAM), Petrochemical and Gas, Product Stewardship and Sustainability, and Management and Leadership. Saturday and Sunday offer professional development courses, with the main conference held on Monday and Tuesday. Additional professional development courses will take place on Wednesday.

Monday and Tuesday sessions include breakfast and luncheon discussions, keynote speakers, concurrent technical sessions, afternoon workshops and technical tours. The keynote session on Monday, featuring Michael Larrañaga, will focus on managing low frequency/high severity events. Tuesday’s General Session will feature Frank Renshaw focusing on incorporating prevention though design methods into the design and redesign process.

Join your fellow professionals in San Antonio for this exciting conference. Visit [www.aihafallconference.org](http://www.aihafallconference.org) or email fallconference@aiha.org for additional details. Registration opens in June.

Fall 2012 Exam Applications

Applications for the fall 2012 exam are now being accepted. The **deadline for submission is August 1st** and the exam window is October-November.

Applicants are reminded that exam slots at the testing centers fill up fast, especially at the end of the testing window. So it is prudent to apply early and pay the exam fee as soon as the application has been approved. This increases the chance that your preferred exam location and date will be available.

Applicants with **international degrees** are required to submit their transcript(s) to a member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services, Inc. ([www.naces.org](http://www.naces.org)). This process takes additional time and the Applicant should plan accordingly.
**The Diplomate Pulse**

In January, 2012, ABIH transitioned to the new CM credit calculation method with the release of two supporting documents: the Overview and the Detailed Guidance. In the March 2012 Newsletter, ABIH asked Diplomates about their preparedness to use the new method.

Results from that survey are as follows:

![Survey Results Chart](chart.png)

**Are you ready to use the new Diplomate-Calculated method?**

- **The method seems straightforward**
- **I’ve reviewed but not yet used the method**
- **I have questions**
- **I have not used the new method**
- **I have no idea what you’re asking about**

N=185

First the **good news**: only a very small percentage of the respondents had “no idea” what we were asking about.

**More good news**: more than half of the respondents have either reviewed the materials or had found the method to be straightforward.

The **could-be-better news**: a healthy percentage had not yet reviewed the published materials. We recognize that the survey was done only a short time after the materials were published and hopefully, if we ran the survey question again today, we’d see a different number.

ABIH wants to ensure that all Diplomates are confidently using the new method. It really is quite simple and you will quickly gain full command of the method. Please try it early in your cycle because you don’t want to be surprised at the end (when it might really matter).

There were quite a few questions/comments that also came with the survey. Answers to those questions are provided elsewhere in this newsletter.

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**CIH Exam Length Changes**

Effective this October – November, the CIH exam will consist of 150 scored items, rather than the previous 175 scored items. The exam will also contain an additional 50 experimental questions, instead of the previous 75 experimental questions. The reduction in length of the exam is consistent with certification industry best practice, as the shorter exam places less of a burden on candidates while still producing reliable and valid results.

Candidates will benefit as the duration of the exam will drop to 5.5 hours, making the test experience less taxing. The optional break between the two sections of the exam will be maintained. The impact on reliability and validity, which are indicators of consistent and accurate results, was carefully investigated before this change was made. It was found that the shorter exam would retain high levels of reliability and validity.

The content of the examination will not be altered and the percentage of items in each domain will remain the same. The ample number of items in each domain area will ensure that the breadth and depth of candidate knowledge is adequately covered.

The deadline for completed applications (including reference, transcripts, and IH coursework documentation) for the Fall 2012 examination is August 1.
The “Other” Way to Earn CM Credit

Category 7 is the CM Worksheet category that is reserved for IH-related activities that don’t logically fit in the other categories. This includes efforts like:

- Serving as an AIHA Session Moderator (0.5 point per session)
- Reviewers or Editors of peer-reviewed journals, journal columns or book chapters (0.5 point per review)
- Submitting acceptable questions for the CIH exam (1 point/5 questions)
- Pro-bono work (0.5 point/40 hours)
- Other professional certifications (up to 5 points)
- Mentoring (1 point per year per Mentee)

Sometimes, CIHs believe that anything can be listed in Category 7 just because it’s classified as our “Other” category. It probably doesn’t help that we use words like “Miscellaneous” to describe some of the activities. However, you should list activities in the section of the worksheet Category 7 only if the activity appears on the official ABIH list.

If your activity is not on the ABIH Category 7 list, do not list it. Instead, contact ABIH for further discussion. We will evaluate its technical merit and consider it for future inclusion. This process can take several months depending upon the type of activity. So Diplomates are asked to do this well before the end of the cycle, i.e., don’t do it at the time that the CM worksheet is submitted.
Exercising Your Professional Judgment
– Providing a PRQ for a CIH Candidate

To deal with complex problems that cannot be assessed and determined from measurement or observation alone, CIHs must routinely apply professional judgment to evaluate situations or provide recommendations. Professional judgment to assess industrial hygiene issues require that powers of discernment are honed through a combination of experience and academic preparation. That same level of professional judgment is required when you fill out a Professional Reference Questionnaire (PRQ) for an ABIH Applicant.

Almost every question on the PRQ asks you to exercise your professional judgment. Even with the definitions provided, the first question on the questionnaire forces you to mentally establish your own expectation of what constitutes “professional industrial hygiene work” as well as whether your own observations are sufficient to enable you to furnish an “informed and objective description”. Equally thought-provoking is the next question asking you to rule out any uncertainty about the Candidate’s fitness for certification. A later question asks you to determine if the Candidate performs “with independent technical responsibility” and seeks confirmation that the Candidate lacks any “significant technical deficiencies”. Your own understanding of the Code of Ethics has to be engaged to adequately evaluate the Candidate’s professional conduct.

As you can see, all of these questions are complex, but please recognize that the CIH’s responses on the PRQ are considered one of the most important components of the Application process. You’re encouraged not only to use your direct observations of the Candidate’s work and work products but to apply your professional judgment to help insure that the Candidate is prepared and qualified.

ABIH values your input and recognizes its importance to CIH certification process. For the fall 2012 exam, a completed application and all support documentation (including references) must be submitted by August 1 for review. The fall exam is offered in October and November.

If you get asked to provide a PRQ, please take this role seriously. We do.

### Actions & Reports

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>New CIHs</td>
<td>Individuals who have recently passed the exam</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abih.org/about-abih/new-cihs">http://www.abih.org/about-abih/new-cihs</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Certified</td>
<td>Individuals who claim to be certified but are not complete the CM process</td>
<td>None at this time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decertified</td>
<td>Individuals who did not complete the CM process</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abih.org/about-abih/decertifications">http://www.abih.org/about-abih/decertifications</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics Issues</td>
<td>Individuals sanctioned for ethics violations</td>
<td>None at this time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Diplomates</td>
<td>Individuals who we cannot locate. Please help us find them.</td>
<td>None at this time</td>
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</table>
Adding & Deleting Rows from the Excel Version of the CM Worksheet

ABIH has two versions of the CM worksheet available for our Diplomates: a PDF version that is designed to be filled out by hand and an Excel version that is completed using your computer. The Excel version automates all of the CM credit calculations and provides warning messages when certain minimums and maximums are achieved in the various categories.

Because the Excel version contains more sophisticated formulas, it is password protected. The protection is there to prevent Diplomates from inadvertently deleting a formula (which of course would disable the calculations).

Some Diplomates have found the password protection to be frustrating especially when they want to add or delete rows on the spreadsheet. This often occurs in Category 4 – Education where Diplomates attend many events over a CM cycle.

Frustrate Not! The Instructions tab contains the password and the steps for adding rows. In the lower left side of the active workbook, the tabs are displayed (see graphic). If the tabs are not visible on your workbook, adjust the Excel view.

If you need help with any aspect of the workbook, please contact Tracy Parsons at tparsons@abih.org or 517-853-5761.

Key Dates – 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Key Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diplomates with Cycle End Date of June 30, ‘12</td>
<td>March 1 – August 1</td>
<td>CM Worksheets Accepted</td>
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<td>June 30</td>
<td>Last Day to Earn CM Credit</td>
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<td>Diplomates with Cycle End Date of Dec 31, ‘12</td>
<td>Sept 1 – Feb 1, ‘13</td>
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<td>Fall Examinees</td>
<td>Aug 1</td>
<td>Applications Due</td>
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<td>Oct 1 – Nov 30</td>
<td>Test Window for fall Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Diplomates</td>
<td>Oct – Dec 1</td>
<td>Annual fees due for 2013</td>
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The New CM Credit Calculation Method  
– Some FAQ and Some FGA

The new Diplomate-Calculated CM credit calculation method is now in full use. The transition started in late 2011 and culminated with the January 2012 release of the supporting resource materials on the ABIH web site: the Overview and the Detailed Guidance (click here to go there now). Since then, ABIH has been encouraging Diplomates to try the new method and ask questions now, not at the end of the CM cycle.

To further facilitate this transition, ABIH will be publishing some of the more frequently asked questions along with our Frequently Given Answers (FGA) in this and future issues of The ABIH Advisor.

Can ABIH have a person take questions via e-mail or telephone?

Questions can be directed to Tracy Parsons (tparsons@abih.org) or Pam Trim (ptrim@abih.org). Both are also available at 517-321-2638.

[Excerpt] – ABIH makes it harder and more confusing to be a CIH and get points. I have talked to many CIHs and most want SIMPLE ways to get points. Get some consistency.

The change to the CM credit calculation method did not affect the types of educational events that each CIH chooses to attend. There are as many now as before. The new method requires the CIH to record “hours” based on their actual participation, which we believe, makes it easier and more straightforward than the point conversion system. For courses, the new CM credit calculation is simple because the “hours” are usually provided by the Sponsor. For conferences, it’s a little more complicated since you would take credit only for the technical sessions you attend.

Can ABIH provide scenarios where a CIH is trying to determine how to determine points and what is acceptable and what is not?

There are several examples built into the Detailed Guidance document. If you use the ‘bookmarks’ feature of the PDF file, you’ll be able to more easily jump around from scenario-to-scenario. If you still have questions after reviewing the guidance document, please contact ABIH.

Does ABIH have any plans to harmonize the AIHA Educational Transcripts and the CM worksheet, making it easier to cut/paste information?

Good suggestion! There are no plans to do this at this time but we’ll look into this.

[Excerpt] I am a new CIH. I am concerned that I don’t have any existing CIH mentors to shepherd me through this method because it is just as new to them as it is to me.

Current CIHs are still a valuable resource for understanding the types of events that are eligible for CM credit. That has not changed. The amount of CM credit for an event has not changed. The only thing that has changed is that the CIH will determine their CM credit (in hours) based on their actual participation in the
technical sessions. If you ever have a question about how much an event is worth (in CM credit), read the Overview and Detailed Guidance documents and then, if you still have questions, contact ABIH.

**How many points can I claim for the 2012 AIHce?**

Starting in 2012, you claim CM “hours” not points in Category 4 (Education). The amount of CM credit claimed is based solely on your actual participation in the technical sessions. This will be different for every person. The maximum CM credit for the 2012 AIHce conference (M-Th) is 37 hours but to achieve that value, you would need to attend every session with no breaks or lunches. That’s possible but not probable.

**In my working world, I am busy with work related tasks. Pushing the point management to me may cut costs and time for ABIH but added time to me.**

It may not be as much time as you might imagine. Please remember that we eliminated the entire CM points approval process, eliminating the need for CIHs to search for approved events in the database, fill out the CM Point Request Form, wait for the ABIH response, file the information and then most frustrating, later find the CM approval numbers which were required on the CM worksheet. Overall, we believe that the new method results in a net savings of time for the CIH.

[Excerpt] I am not confident that my documentation will be adequate until after the fact (i.e., if I am audited). Will my definitions of IH – related activity comport with ABIH’s, even after the fact?

In the Detailed Guidance document (on the web site), there are many examples of what is and is not acceptable for IH CM credit. If your subject matter is not addressed in these examples, please contact ABIH prior to claiming the CM credit, especially if you will need those hours to meet the minimum requirements.

**What if ABIH does not accept our points and we are at the end of our cycle?**

This contingency is addressed in the Detailed Guidance document. If ABIH has reason to believe that the CIH has made a good-faith effort to complete the CM worksheet, a one-time, six-month cycle extension will be granted to allow the CIH to accrue additional CM credit.

**Will ABIH offer a preliminary review of a CM worksheet submission to see if we are on the right track?**

We are unable to offer complete CM worksheet pre-reviews due to the significant Staff resources that would be required (~325 man-hours per year). However, CIHs are encouraged to contact ABIH about any individual worksheet item where there is a question. Please do this well in advance of the end of the cycle. Our response time is slower at the end of the cycle due to the high volume of worksheets that are being reviewed.
The ABIH Staff will be pleased to work with you on any questions you may have about ABIH and its certification programs. Feel free to contact any one of the Staff listed on our web site at http://www.abih.org/about-abih/staff

ABIH hours of operation are 8:00–12:00 and 1:00–4:30 (EST), Monday–Friday with the exception of the following U.S. holidays when the office is closed: New Year’s Day (January 1), Memorial Day, Independence Day (July 4th), Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Eve.

If you have any comments about this Newsletter or its content, please contact Tracy Parsons at tparsons@abih.org.

The ABIH Newsletter is published three times per year. Current and back copies are available at http://www.abih.org/general/newsletter.html