

# Debra M. Gursha, MS, CIH, CSP

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## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER

Unique combination of simultaneous and successful experiences in **manufacturing safety, industrial hygiene, occupational safety**, environmental consulting, and graduate coursework in **emergency management**; provides a four-dimensional perspective to develop and execute realistic and actionable health and safety programs in any environment, no matter how complex.

## AREAS OF SPECIALTY

Manufacturing Safety  
Machine Guarding  
Emergency Management

Lockout/Tagout (LOTO)  
Fire Code Interpretation  
Environmental Reporting

Safety Training  
Root Cause Analysis  
Industrial Hygiene Sampling

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### GENERAL DYNAMICS

#### Senior Industrial Hygienist/Laser Safety Officer (2020 to present)

Provide advanced industrial hygiene services to a RI-based defense contractor. Investigate and remediate workplace issues involving possible overexposures to toxic and physical workplace agents Consult with medical professionals, such as audiologists and occupational physicians, regarding employee sensitivity issues, potential over exposure to workplace hazards, and respiratory functions. Provide flexible services to accommodate rotating work shifts and work locations.

- Developed and implemented a new Robotics Safety Program to protect the health and safety of employees who work with and around robotics.
- Expanded the Laser Safety Program at Quonset Point, RI to reflect the expanded use of laser equipment in production.
- Increased the number of industrial hygiene sampling by 75% in one year in response to company growth at Quonset Point, RI.
- Reconfigured company Ergonomics program to include pain management techniques for employees with past military injuries.

### NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

#### Senior Engineer/Staff Liaison (2018 to 2020)

Provided fire code interpretation to local AHJs (Authority Having Jurisdiction) and customer base within US, Canada, and Caribbean. Coordinated updates of fire and life safety codes via technical meetings utilizing Roberts Rules of Order. Oversaw laboratory safety, health care safety, hazardous materials, hot work, manufacturing, and NEC implementation. Official trainer for MA Hot Work Safety Certificate program.

- Coordinated the drafting of new and improved industrial safety standards related to Chemical and Industrial Hazards in high hazard environments.
- Successfully handled a 50% surge in domestic and global industrial accidents.
- Developed new, comprehensive technical safety standards related to hazardous waste sorting facilities.
- Prepared safety rebuttals to OSHA related to the potential relaxation of electrical safety standards.

### UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-BOSTON

#### Fire & Life Safety Officer (2010 to 2018)

Supervised technicians and graduate student employees to optimize EHS systems. Mitigated risk through life safety compliance surveys while performing fire safety inspections in accordance with MA Fire Code, 527 CMR, and NFPA Life Safety 101. Issued hot work permits and conducted daily construction site inspections. Performed accident investigations and recommended corrective action to university administration. Serviced fire suppression systems.

- Served as biosafety officer for R&D laboratories and health services in BSL 1 and BSL 2 R&D.
- Member of university's animal care, radiation, and emergency management committees.
- Developed new detailed, "all hazard" building evacuation plans for each building on the UMass Boston campus including Nantucket Field Station.
- Developed and implemented a 100-person fire safety team to facilitate evacuations across campus.
- Assumed the additional responsibilities of industrial hygienist in response related to staffing changes within the Safety department.

#### **FEMA-OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT CADRE Lead Safety Officer/Temporary Employee (2010 to 2012)**

Deployed to Montana, Vermont, and New Hampshire on temporary assignments for disaster recovery operations. Protected the health and safety of FEMA employees during deployment. Identified new risks to employees and worked with command staff to remediate risks.

- Provided emergency response, as part of "Command Staff," to deployment across the US to address an increase in spring flooding damage.
- Worked with local state government and Small Business Association (SBA) to restore impacted areas while protecting the health of the FEMA and SBA employees.

#### **MASSACHUSETTS DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY**

##### **Certified Industrial Hygienist/Environmental Engineer III (1996 to 2010)**

Conducted detailed evaluations on occupational safety and health issues for private and public-sector employers throughout the state using traditional field chemistry methods and digital technology. Evaluated data and provided recommendations for remediation of documented safety issues. Responded to workplace accidents, including hazardous spills and gas emissions, and facilitate/oversee remediation work done by outside contractors. OSHA 10- and 30-Hour trainer and VPP auditor.

- Performed frequent life safety inspections for health care facilities in both the private and public sector before Joint Commission inspections.
- Successfully remediated 98% of workplace violations reported in safety reports for private sector employers and several state facilities.
- Earned the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' *2005 Pride and Performance Award* in recognition of timely project management and contributions above and beyond.
- Named MA Commission on the Status of Women's *2007 Unsung Heroine of Massachusetts*, in recognition of women who make their communities and the State better places to live and work.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS & REGISTRATION**

New England American Industrial Hygiene Association-Secretary/Executive Committee-10 years  
 American Society of Safety Professionals, Greater Boston chapter  
 American Board of Industrial Hygiene, Diplomat status, Comprehensive Practice, 1997  
 American Board of Certified Safety Professionals, Diplomat status, Comprehensive Practice, 2016  
 American Society of Safety Professionals-Greater Boston and Low Country Chapters

### **EDUCATION**

**MASSACHUSETTS MARITIME ACADEMY**, Buzzards Bay, MA  
 Master of Science (MS) in Emergency Management

**VIRGINIA TECH**, Blacksburg, VA  
 Bachelor of Science (BS) in Textile Science and Chemistry