

The Institute and Academy - History & Mission

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With the proliferation of environmental, safety and health laws during the early 1970's and 1980's and the rapid expansion of the profession of hazardous materials management, the non-profit *Institute of Hazardous Materials Management (IHMM)* recognized the need to provide credentialed recognition to this fast growing segment of the professional workforce. The Institute created the *Certified Hazardous Materials Managers (CHMM)* program and credential. The first Certified Hazardous Materials Manager credential was awarded in 1984. From the beginning, professionals who desired the CHMM credential have met the highest standards of ethics, education, experience, and competence.

From the very beginning, CHMMs wanted and needed a membership organization to foster networking and educational opportunities. The Institute founded the *Academy of Certified Hazardous Materials Managers (ACHMM)* in 1985 to meet this need. Almost immediately many local CHMMs began forming local affiliated chapters of the Academy.

Originally the Academy was a part of the Institute, a position which is unusual among professional membership organizations and the certification programs they support. In 1995, the Academy incorporated as a separate non-profit membership organization, although it remains closely affiliated with the Institute.

The Academy has developed and matured throughout the years. Although in existence since 1985, Pete Cook, for whom our Founders Award is named, was the first elected president of the Academy in 1989. Initially, a loosely organized group of professionals, the Academy has evolved and is well on its way to becoming a mature national organization with over 60 state chapters and over 7000 members.

Recently, the Academy began developing written policies and procedures, using a standard format and numbering system. Before this written documentation existed, policies were discussed, debated, voted on, and passed only to have the process repeated when a new Board of Directors was elected. The only history of organizational decisions was buried in file cabinets or came through the memory of long-term members. The process of encoding policies has had a freeing affect on the board of directors and more time can be devoted to the important tasks of long-term planning and resource allocation.

An annual operating plan with goals and objectives closely tied to the budget is now an integral and annual part of Academy Board activities. The plan is developed with input and budget allocation requests from our national committee chairs. The operating plan is used as a basis to determine whether the Academy leadership is meeting its annual goals. It is a valuable tool for tracking successes and to ensure that unmet goals are not inadvertently forgotten as board members change.

Many CHMMs are still confused about the two separate organizations, the Institute and the Academy and why both are needed. In 1994, as the Academy and Institute were engaged in separate incorporation, a document titled *Relative Roles and Responsibilities – IHMM and ACHMM* was developed. This document first reviewed the goals of each organization and then went on to identify the roles each organization plays in fulfilling these goals.

The **Institute's** goals, as stated in that document, include:

- To provide credentialed recognition to those professionals engaged in the management and engineering control of hazardous materials who have attained the required level of education, experience, and competence;
- To foster CHMMs' competency with professional development through continuing education, peer group interaction and technological stimulation;
- To provide government, industry and academia with a mechanism for identifying hazardous materials management professionals who have fulfilled the requirements for certification by a professional peer group.

The **Academy's** goals, again from that document, include:

- To improve the quality and effectiveness of hazardous materials management;
- To facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience among professionals and organizations vitally concerned with hazardous materials management;
- To educate and encourage communication between industry, government and academia through the dissemination of a common body of knowledge in the field of hazardous materials management.

Each of the organizations has clearly defined and very separate roles. For example, the Institute is the credentialing organization and the Academy is the membership organization. The Academy is not responsible for anything to do with the process of credentialing individual CHMMs. Conversely, the Institute is not a membership organization, and thusly does not have anything to do with membership services.

The Institute is responsible for establishing, maintaining, and executing a process to certify, recertify, and decertify hazardous materials professionals. They determine the types and levels of certification, the qualifications required of the candidates, they develop the examination and they arrange for the delivery of the examination. They establish standards and requirements for periodic recertification, and they determine the nature and extent of causes for revocation of certification.

The Academy, on the other hand, serves as the principal mechanism for fostering the professional development of CHMMs. This is achieved through networking, education and training activities, dissemination of knowledge through newsletters, print and non

print media, and through our world class annual National Conference with a primary focus of providing an exceptional educational experience.

During the last couple of years the Academy leadership has been busy with several valuable projects based on our mission.

Academy Mission

The Academy of Certified Hazardous Materials Managers will foster the professional development of hazardous materials managers by offering opportunities for education, facilitating peer group interaction, and establishing the CHMM credential as the standard of excellence in the hazardous materials management profession.

- Professionally managed National CHMM Conference – since 1987
- Professional Website with employment services, member directory, discussion forums and up to date news about the CHMM Program
- National Academy Awards Program – to publicly recognize and honor outstanding CHMMs
- Publication of the comprehensive Hazardous Materials Management – Desk Reference - written by CHMMs and published by McGraw Hill
- Quarterly membership Newsletter – The Manager
- Development of an approved National Overview Course – Available at no cost to all affiliated chapters
- Annual Leadership Seminar – held regionally and in conjunction with an Academy Board meeting
- Partnership with Transafe – offering member discounts for their ER subscriptions and services
- Joint Institute-Academy initiatives to promote the credential to governmental agencies like DOE

In summary, when the Institute grants the CHMM credential, it is the beginning of a career journey for the hazardous materials professional. Membership in the Academy enhances professional status, provides for continuing growth, peer interaction and awareness of emerging scientific and legislative issues.

The Institute and the Academy will continue to carry out their respective roles and responsibilities to ensure that the CHMM credential is the premiere credential for the environmental, safety and health profession into the new millennium.