

Opportunity Title: EPA Research Project on RCRA Contingency Plan Incident Reporting Multi-Year Trends Analysis

Opportunity Reference Code: EPA-OLEM-ORCR-2024-09

Organization U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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A complete application consists of:

- An application
- Transcript(s) – For this opportunity, an unofficial transcript or copy of the student academic records printed by the applicant or by academic advisors from internal institution systems may be submitted. All transcripts must be in English or include an official English translation. Click [here](#) for detailed information about acceptable transcripts.
- A current resume/CV, including academic history, employment history, relevant experiences, and publication list
- Two educational or professional recommendations

All documents must be in English or include an official English translation.

Application Deadline 12/6/2024 3:00:00 PM Eastern Time Zone

Description ***Applications may be reviewed on a rolling-basis and this posting could close before the deadline.** Click [here](#) for information about the selection process.

EPA Office/Lab and Location: A research training opportunity is currently available at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA), Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM), Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR). ORCR works to protect human health and the environment by implementing the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976. ORCR's mission is to ensure proper waste management, promote resource conservation, prevent harmful exposures, and oversee land cleanup for productive use. We do this by establishing and implementing regulatory standards and by creating best practices in collaboration with communities, governments, businesses, and other organizations. ORCR implements the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Research Project: The Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR), in partnership with the EPA's Regional offices and the states, collects information about incidents that have occurred at RCRA-permitted treatment, storage and disposal facilities (TSDFs) and PCB storage and disposal facilities across the nation with the goal of reducing the risk of incidents through shared knowledge with our regulatory partners. By learning about incidents that occurred elsewhere, state and regional regulators may increase their knowledge of how to identify and prevent potential hazards at facilities they regulate. In addition, the program will be better poised to identify trends and patterns that may not be evident within one state or one EPA Region.

The participant will research and evaluate data from previously collected



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RCRA Incident Summary reports in order to identify trends in the type, and cause of incidents at facilities. (E.g., worker errors, chemical incompatibilities, equipment malfunctions, process errors, etc.). As a follow-up to that research, the participant will prepare a summary of findings and observations, and suggest recommendations, based on observable trends, to help policy makers determine whether further action is needed to reduce the number, type, and severity of incidents. Further actions may include drafting “information bulletins,” or similar communications to call attention to ways that facilities can improve operations, such as through improved personnel training, process/equipment design, etc. The participant may suggest the nature and content of those further actions.

Learning Objectives: Additionally, under the guidance of a mentor, the selected participant may have opportunities to consult with EPA’s state partners with expertise and knowledge regarding incidents at TSDFs. In addition to research and analysis of incident reporting, the participant may have opportunities to contribute in other areas of the RCRA Hazardous Waste Permitting Program.

For the past 7 years, ORCR has collected and reviewed a diverse group of incident reports that facilities must submit to their regulatory authority when an event occurs that requires implementation of their contingency plan, e.g., after a fire, explosion, spill or release of hazardous waste or hazardous waste constituents (40 CFR 264/265.51(b), 264/265.56(i)). These reports are described in the regulations at 40 CFR 264.56(i). For PCB facilities, reports are required to be submitted under the Spill Cleanup Policy (40 CFR 761.125(a)(1)).

The mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment. EPA works to ensure that: Americans have clean air, land and water; National efforts to reduce environmental risks are based on the best available scientific information; Federal laws protecting human health and the environment are administered and enforced fairly, effectively and as Congress intended; Environmental stewardship is integral to U.S. policies concerning natural resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture, industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in establishing environmental policy; All parts of society have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks; Contaminated lands and toxic sites are cleaned up; and chemicals in the marketplace are reviewed for safety.

Mentor(s): The mentor for this opportunity is Jeff Gaines (gaines.jeff@epa.gov). If you have questions about the nature of the research please contact the mentor.

Anticipated Appointment Start Date: **January 6, 2025.** All start dates are flexible and vary depending on numerous factors. Click [here](#) for detailed information about start dates.

Appointment Length: The appointment will initially be for one year and

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may be renewed three to four additional years upon EPA recommendation and subject to availability of funding.

Level of Participation: The appointment is full-time.

Participant Stipend: The participant will receive a monthly stipend commensurate with educational level and experience. Click [here](#) for detailed information about full-time stipends.

EPA Security Clearance: Completion of a successful background investigation by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is required for an applicant to be on-boarded at EPA.

ORISE Information: This program, administered by ORAU through its contract with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to manage the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE), was established through an interagency agreement between DOE and EPA. Participants do not become employees of EPA, DOE or the program administrator, and there are no employment-related benefits. Proof of health insurance is required for participation in this program. Health insurance can be obtained through ORISE.

ORISE offers all ORISE EPA graduate students and Postdocs a free 5 year membership to the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA).

The successful applicant(s) will be required to comply with Environmental, Safety and Health (ES&H) requirements of the hosting facility, including but not limited to, COVID-19 requirements (e.g. facial covering, physical distancing, testing, vaccination).

Questions: Please see the [FAQ section](#) of our website. After reading, if you have additional questions about the application process please email ORISE.EPA.REG@orau.org and include the reference code for this opportunity.

Qualifications The qualified candidate should be currently pursuing or have received a bachelor's or master's degree in the one of the relevant fields. Degree must have been received within the past five years, or anticipated to be received by the appointment start date.

Preferred skills/experience:

- Knowledge of environmental sciences and environmental law, in particular, RCRA hazardous waste regulations.
- Knowledge or experience working with state environmental agencies, especially regulatory implementation and enforcement.
- Knowledge about hazardous waste management.
- Attention to detail, strong teamwork and communication skills, experience working with multi-disciplinary teams.
- Skills in Project management, data analysis and visualization, statistical analysis, database management – expertise with statistical analysis software would be highly beneficial.

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- Technical writing skills, including publishing reports or peer-reviewed scientific journal articles.
- Skills with *Microsoft Office Suite*, especially Excel.

- Eligibility Requirements**
- **Citizenship:** U.S. Citizen Only
 - **Degree:** Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree received within the last 60 months or currently pursuing.
 - **Discipline(s):**
 - **Chemistry and Materials Sciences** ([5](#))
 - **Engineering** ([4](#))
 - **Environmental and Marine Sciences** ([4](#))
 - **Life Health and Medical Sciences** ([4](#))
 - **Mathematics and Statistics** ([11](#))