

Special Government Employees in the DoD

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a Special Government Employee (SGE) Program in place to further establish a partnership with organizations who earn OSHA Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) recognition. This one pager provides information on how to become an SGE and describes the benefits of being an SGE within your organization.



OSHA utilizes SGEs to conduct on-site assessments for VPP approval.
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WHAT IS A SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE (SGE)?

An SGE is a “qualified volunteer” who assists OSHA in assessing organizational safety management systems (SMS) against VPP criteria. They are a valuable resource to help OSHA conduct on-site evaluations, review annual self-evaluation submissions, and drive best practices and continuous improvement in the safety and health (S&H) field.

An SGE is a representative with:

- Knowledge of OSHA regulations and VPP criteria
- Insight and experience with OSHA VPP implementation and sustainment
- Leadership experience in S&H
- Strong interpersonal, reading, and writing skills
- Ability to conduct interviews and site walkthroughs during an on-site OSHA VPP assessment.



Image retrieved from Bing Images

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE?

To become an SGE, you must:

- Work (or have worked recently) full-time at a VPP Star site for at least two (2) years
- Be a United States citizen
- Obtain management support to pursue the SGE process
- Complete an [SGE application](#)
 - Review [qualification requirements](#) prior to applying (requirements differ for S&H professionals versus non-S&H professionals)
- Attend the three-day [OSHA Course 5450, SGE Training](#)
- Commit to a three (3)-year term as an SGE
- Be familiar with the [SGE Programs and Policies Manual for OSHA VPP](#)

DURING AN ASSESSMENT, AN SGE MAY:

- Review documents to determine the effectiveness of the written SMS
- Conduct site walkthroughs
- Perform formal and informal interviews
- Help prepare the written on-site evaluation report
- Share findings, recommendations, and best practices

WHAT ARE MY EXPECTATIONS?

SGEs must perform at least three (3) qualifying activities during their SGE term. One of these qualifying activities must be **participation in at least one (1) on-site VPP assessment with OSHA.**

Other qualifying activities include:

- Review a VPP application
- Review an annual self-evaluation report
- Teach the OSHA SGE Course
- Lead a VPP Application Workshop
- Provide on-site mentoring to a potential or reapproving VPP Star site
- Present a VPP or S&H topic at a regional or national [Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association](#) (VPPPA) conference

SGEs must work with their Regional OSHA VPP Manager to choose the qualifying activities aligning with their skill set. These qualifying activities must be completed in order to be reapproved as an SGE once the three (3)-year term comes to an end.



The image illustrates SGEs working together.
Image retrieved from OSHA.

HOW DO I FIND FUNDING?

The Department of Defense (DoD) funds SGE training for three (3) candidates for each DoD VPP Star site every year. The DoD also makes travel funds available for SGEs to assist OSHA in conducting on-site VPP Star assessments. If you are from a Star site and interested in becoming an SGE, contact your command and Service point-of-contact to request approval and funding.

WHAT BENEFITS DO I GET FOR BEING A SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE?

Becoming an SGE is beneficial to you and your organization. Benefits include, but are not limited to:

1. Certification Points or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) towards maintaining or obtaining a S&H-related credential
2. A tuition waiver for OSHA Training Institute (OTI) courses
3. Awards and recognition from OSHA, to include the SGE of the Year Award
4. Greater understanding of the VPP requirements
5. Better understanding of regional VPP expectations, which is beneficial for recertification
6. Opportunity to gather and share best practices
7. Support the DoD and Star site's commitment to having a world-class SMS

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smscx.org/>.