

ASSE Debuts New Legal Services Branch

ASSE's new Legal Services Branch of the Consultants Practice Specialty provides a forum for lawyers, legal professionals and expert witnesses with expertise in safety, health and the environment (SH&E) to connect on important legal issues within the SH&E profession. The Branch also intends to serve those professionals operating as SH&E regulators, litigation attorneys and expert witnesses or forensic specialists and/or those analyzing and evaluating SH&E policies and regulatory compliance from a legal perspective.

Legal risks and SH&E legal compliance are more important than ever with recent workplace incidents, fatalities and environmental disasters. ASSE members must be aware of the intersection of legal enforcement and SH&E and must know when it is appropriate to resource legal advice. As part of the Consultants Practice Specialty, the Legal Services Branch will provide resources, referrals, connections and interactive services for consultants seeking legal expertise or for those who would like legal input into consultancy decisions.

Norm Keith, B.A., LL.B., CRSP, an SH&R lawyer and consultant, is the inaugural Legal Services Branch Chair. He sees the new branch as a "constructive, interactive, professional forum for ASSE members to have legal issues raised, reviewed and resourced; in other words, the Legal Services Branch will recognize the critical role of law, legal standards and legal enforcement in the SH&E profession and will encourage mutual support, understanding and assistance for lawyers who practice in the area and those ASSE members who need answers to critical legal problems."

Keith hopes the development of the Legal Services Branch will dramatically increase the number of lawyers in the U.S. and internationally who will be alert to the value of ASSE membership, the assistance that Consultants Practice Specialty members can provide to lawyers and the awareness and quality of legal services provided to ASSE members. The Legal Services Branch will assist both lawyers and ASSE members, especially those in the Consultants Practice Specialty, with improved understanding of their respective areas of expertise, disciplines and contribution to employer and organization compliance with legal standards, risk management and incident prevention.

J. Terrence Grisim, CSP, CDS, CPSM, ARM, Legal Services Branch Vice Chair, sees the new branch as a forum for ASSE members who are involved in litigation consulting to network, stay up to date on current trends affecting their practices and provide a resource of trained and experienced professionals for those in need of these services.

The Legal Services Branch currently seeks members to join its Advisory Committee, write for the Branch Consultants Practice Specialty newsletter and help populate the Branch's website (<http://www.asse.org/practicespecialties/legalservices/>) with content and links. For more information, contact Norm Keith at norm.keith@gowlings.com. To join the Legal Services Branch, contact ASSE customer service at (847) 699-2929.