

COUNCIL ON PRACTICES AND STANDARDS

Serving the Specialist of the
Safety, Health and Environmental
(SH&E) Profession

Dear ASSE Members:

ASSE's Council on Practices and Standards (CoPS) recently surveyed the practice specialty membership to find out what motivates members to volunteer in practice specialty, branch, common interest group, advisory committee and standards development activities and to learn what members gain by doing so. Members' responses are given below.

We hope their responses will encourage you to further participate in CoPS activities. CoPS appreciates practice specialty members' support, and the Council will continue to create new opportunities for members to help each other and to share their expertise.



Sincerely,
George W. Pearson, CSP, ARM
Vice President
Council on Practices & Standards

What motivates you as a volunteer to participate in practices and standards (practice specialties, branches, common interest groups, advisory committees and standards development)?

“A chance to influence for the better some aspect of worker and consumer safety.”

“Knowing that my actions make a positive difference for the professionals in my chapter, branch, etc.”

“My principal motivator is enhancement of credentials. Second is enhancement of ASSE.”

“Ability to influence industry standards and practices, learning current cutting-edge concerns and supporting industry to do better. In my litigation work, certain standards sometimes come into play. Being involved in their development can prove useful in obtaining work and interpreting the standard to a particular set of facts.”

“Technical expertise, networking with and helping fellow SH&E professionals and serving ASSE. Early in my career, I decided that I owned my career, not my employer. The things I do with ASSE benefit my career and me. I do not want any employer to own my career. That is why it does not matter if my employer pays my dues or not. I am investing dues money and my time to further my career, regardless of my employer. Fortunately, my employer supports my efforts with ASSE.”

“As a lifelong member of the SH&E profession, I believe that those of us who have benefited from the profession should give back to it.”

“I was accepted for who I was. I came to CoPS looking for something to do after working in my local chapter. I was in middle management and thought that was a good place to start. My first meeting was with the Management Practice Specialty (MPS). They greeted me with open arms and made me feel welcome. I started making suggestions, and everyone liked them. MPS leadership would ask me to do something, and in most cases, the assignment aligned with what I had recently completed in a master’s class in college. It might have been a plan of some type or reworking a current procedure. I was given total trust to complete the assignment as I wanted, and in most cases, there was little correction/modification.”

“The opportunity to write and be published. I always had a desire to write and express myself but did not have the confidence to do so. I always did in school with papers and articles, but that was school. In my first MPS meeting, I was asked to write an article. That first 300-word article was the most challenging I had ever written. It took hours and sweat and stress. I received some positive feedback from a few members (mostly support from MPS leadership), and it gave me the confidence so that now I have been published in multifarious venues. My total article count numbers more than 150.”

“The chance to give presentations. I have never enjoyed being in front of a group. Public speaking was well above my fear of heights, flying and enclosed spaces. My first exposure was with my local chapter then with MPS. I first presented to local small groups about CoPS and the practice specialties. Soon after, I addressed local and larger groups. My first professional development conference (PDC) presentation was to a group of about 20 people. I walked away vowing it would never happen again. More than 200 SH&E professionals attended my last PDC presentation—it was great!”

“An opportunity to lead or to be in charge. Working on several small committees gave me a voice to express myself and to encourage others to do the same. As I started to grow within MPS, the opportunities to express myself and to encourage others to do the same emerged. At first, I was convinced that I would make a mistake or foul things up. However, the more I did it, the more confidence I had that I could do it. MPS and CoPS have done more to place me in leadership assignments than any other experience I have had. My most recent leadership position within my company resulted in my company receiving a major aerospace contract. I remain the lead safety spokesperson for all of our organization’s contracts.”

“Value to my employer. As I started the process within ASSE, my value to my company has increased. Key to increasing the value to my company started with ASSE providing me recognition for what I accomplished. The first two or three awards I received became visible to my management. As my responsibilities and the number of published articles placed on my management’s desks increased, so did my management’s respect for me—especially when I told them about my nomination for a new opportunity with ASSE. With the support of my associations within ASSE, my company leadership now serves on several standards committees. Leadership within my company locally and at the corporate level consider me the go-to person for ANSI, VPP and other major issues.”

“Networking. I entered the CoPS world never having known one of ASSE’s presidents. Today, I am proud to say that over the past ten years or so, each president has become a close friend and someone whom I look up to as a mentor. If it stopped there, that would be the best value of my activity. However, I have had the chance to know and work with thousands of members in the time that I have been active in ASSE’s volunteer leadership. My business card file permits me to keep in contact with these great ASSE members. It is not uncommon to

visit them in their hometowns, at their businesses and sometimes even at an airport. It is a comfort to be able to call one of these members and to confer on safety (and sometimes baseball)?”

“What motivates me is the opportunity to contribute and to maybe steer things in the direction of my professional beliefs.”

“I volunteer because I believe in the Society and what it can do for all of us.”

“The opportunity to contribute to the betterment of the SH&E profession through a leadership role within ASSE.”

“Since the SH&E profession is very broad, practice specialties allow me greater opportunities to interface with and learn from my peers in my specific industry. The core motivation is sharing and occasionally solving similar concerns and issues, while at a minimum, knowing that my issues are not unique and are shared among my peers. We are typically a remote workforce with few employer-based opportunities to learn from others. Practice specialties are also a great way to learn how other organizations operate and succeed—to the SH&E profession’s benefit.”

“Belief in a duty to give back to the SH&E profession and ASSE, contribute to the SH&E body of knowledge, career/professional growth, ability to meet and interact with ASSE members, ease of participation (convenient teleconference calls/web-based communications and interactions/face-to-face meeting formats), focused assignments with reasonable expectations and leadership opportunities. My time is appreciated and my involvement makes a worthwhile impact on the Society, our membership and the SH&E profession.”

“The need to give back to an area that has given me so much in emotional and financial ways.”

“I think my motivation has changed over the years. As I started on this quest for the Z390 standard (hydrogen sulfide training) back in the mid-1980s, I was looking for some type of ‘enforcement hammer’ for our newly developed H2S instructor development training course that ASSE initially sponsored. After the standard’s development, and as it matured, I felt a need to stay the course and to ensure that as long as a need for the standard existed, we could depend on it being current and available. Now, with ACGIH’s published NIC for H2S, I feel that we have a greater need now to help protect those employers and employees whom we represent through this standard. We must ensure that moderation is maintained in the TLV/TWA and STEL values. If we as volunteers in the standards committees are not willing to spend the time and effort to this end, who will?”

“I want to leave a legacy after I retire from the profession. In my estimation, ASSE’s practice specialties plus any committees I am asked to be on or to work with are the best way to do that.”

“My motivation to volunteer is a bit complex. As a 25-year member, I feel I have gained much through ASSSE and want to return something to the Society. Also, I notice that many of these committees can benefit and seem to appreciate tactful, constructive input from a 40-year professional in safety engineering and ASSE fellow. Without the positive response, I might reconsider. I am also an active consultant, expert witness, chapter and region participant. Staying abreast of these matters helps me professionally.”

“The opportunity to learn from others and to learn by working through issues of interest with a group of technical experts who share different viewpoints and knowledge bases.”

“In my 19 years of membership, I received as much out of ASSE as I have put in. I am motivated by my own selfish interest to continue to contribute the SH&E profession and to get the same in return. My theory is that the more I put into the profession, the more I will receive in return, specifically growth, knowledge, networking links in my industry and professional relationships that enable me to do better at my job and to be a better SH&E professional overall.”

“Good working relationships with staff and members.”

“Professional development, networking, the ability to shape/influence the future of the SH&E profession and the chance to share ideas and opinions with fellow professionals.”

“I consider it my professional obligation to give back to the Society that supports what I do in the field. I think it is my job to help further the cause, and since it cannot be done without volunteers, someone must do it. I also see it as part of my own professional development because I learn much safety issues that I would not get on my own. And frankly, I do it for the business contacts and opportunity to market myself and to find opportunities for more work.”

“It is important for me to make a contribution to the safety field as a whole.”

“What motivates me is the professional expertise networking availability. Professionals to whom I can turn with industry-specific solutions and experience. Technical knowledge through the various products and services that CoPS provides. The body of knowledge, emerging topics facing our profession and industries technical support on government affairs matters.”

“My motivation is to repay the SH&E field, the people in it and ASSE for what the profession has given me. I have been in this field for more than 30 years. It has provided me a livelihood, fed my family, and in many ways, through the companies for which I have worked for and the industry and professional societies with which I have been associated, it has shaped me into who I am. Many before me helped shape this field and to take and not give back is not in my nature. I can repay this debt by contributing what I can to advance our profession for the young people entering the field and for those fellow practitioners who have not yet had the opportunity to participate as I have in these organizations.”

“Practices and standards work well for me because of my work situation. I am often on the road and find it difficult to make chapter meetings. My work with practices and standards can often be done via conference call and e-mail, with a limited number of required face-to-face meetings. I find this much easier to schedule. It also allows me to work on ASSE projects as my workflow dictates.”

“My motivation is based on my 30 years of experience as an SH&E professional. I have taken advantage of ASSE’s many benefits, and I think I have something to offer the younger SH&E professionals. It is the

opportunity to give back to the field/profession that has given so much to my family and me. I also have the opportunity to interact with other SH&E professionals and to discuss subjects of common interest and concern. It gives me another chance to learn from the experiences of others in our field.”

“In 1988, I became involved at the local chapter level because it seemed to be the appropriate thing to do. At the time, my local chapter had many opportunities to mentor members who had less experience in SH&E, had not been exposed to multiple industries and did not fully understand all occupational safety and health programs mandated by regulatory agencies. Chapter members were in insurance, but they did not appear to absorb anything from their visits to policyholder locations.

Later, while attending a PDC, I expressed interest in becoming involved in ASSE at the practice specialty level. Since I kept changing industry segments, I choose the MPS. I initially received the role of Membership Development Committee chair. Unfortunately, I did not receive a description of the expectations associated with that position. Later, someone else volunteered for that position, and I was more than relieved to give it up. In time, I was asked to participate in the awards and honors process. My colleagues provided much guidance and direction.”

“I am internally motivated by the sense to make things better. I am motivated by a need to do what is right and just. I am motivated by the need to make the world a better place then how I found it.”

“I am professionally motivated by the thought of making a significant contribution to the field in which I work. I love my work and am anxious to share and contribute to others the technical knowledge within my chosen field.”

“I am motivated by the peer recognition I receive when working on standards. I find this personally and professionally rewarding. However, along the way, I find that working on standards puts me face to face with world-renowned professionals, which permits me to listen to and learn from them and to sharpen my own skills and breadth of knowledge.”

“Continuing educational opportunities, company support and access to a specific area of professional interest.”

“I like having a volunteer position to help grow myself professionally while assisting the growth of peers. I like being part of something that can benefit many people, in this case, other SH&E professionals.”

“I enjoy working with ASSE. My chapter includes some great people, and I enjoy their passion for what they do. When our region asked if I would accept a volunteer leadership position, I agreed.”

“This is a great way to help improve safety and health in the U.S. and around the world. It is also a great forum to learn, exchange ideas and network.”

“Professional involvement and contribution to standards have always been one of my commitments, and I enjoy the opportunities to contribute my technical expertise to the safety and fire protection profession.”

“I participate to stay on the cutting edge of new developments.”

“First and foremost is the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. ASSE has so many committees and groups that provide an opportunity for people to be involved in a decision-making setting and to explore passions that are not available through their own organizations. Whether you are a practice specialty administrator or advisory committee member, ample opportunities are available to develop leadership qualities. I have struggled to devote the time I believe is required and necessary to keep pace with ASSE’s mission and the changes going on in the world today, but I believe the experience will be worth it.

Secondly, I have been exposed to a part of the Society that I never knew or cared to know about in the past. Most ASSE members do not realize how much they do not know about the Society and how much more there is than a monthly magazine, chapter meetings and the PDC.”

“I personally enjoy the ability to contribute to the Society and to give back to a profession that has been very good to me. In helping the SH&E profession, senior players must find ways to support and provide assistance to those just entering the SH&E field.”

“I volunteer for ASSE on the ANSI Z87 committee because I feel I have much knowledge to offer. With that knowledge of the industry and products, I can see that the ANSI Z87.1 standard provides the right balance for both users and manufacturers. At times, I feel I must lean more to users’ interest because that is the moral thing to do. It also protects the PPE industry’s image.

“I was raised in a family that believes in volunteering. It is important to give back. Over the years I have been in business, many people have helped me. When I ask how I can repay them, the answer is the same—you cannot help me, but you can help someone else. Volunteering is part of the answer. It is also a great opportunity to meet people who share similar interests. I am satisfied to see the end result, such as a final draft standard approved and published.”

“The greatest benefit is networking with other SH&E professionals. I have met so many more people through the practice specialties than I would have otherwise as just an ASSE member at large.”

From a personal perspective, what do you receive by volunteering in practice specialties, branches, common interest groups, advisory committees and standards development?

“Satisfaction.”

“The good feelings that come from helping people. It broadens my network of professional contacts and improves my leadership skills.”

“Networking and meeting some good people.”

“Personal gratification mostly and some professional recognition but in a very small community.”

“Training I would receive nowhere else (e.g., budget management, team building, leadership, etc.), cutting-edge information, satisfaction for serving, a stronger network and diverse views on various topics.”

“A sense of accomplishment and pride in my profession and in what I have contributed.”

“It is impossible to list all of the benefits I have gained from my association with CoPS. My activities with CoPS have prepared me for the work I do today, helped me be confident in my demeanor and positions on issues, educated me in the principals of safety and rewarded me for assignments that have provided me with training and experience. CoPS has been the most enjoyable, challenging and rewarding experience of my career. I thank CoPS staff for this and for their influence on all who volunteer to support this effort. I am indebted to all of you.”

“By volunteering, I receive education from others more knowledgeable than me, networking opportunities with other members, satisfaction of knowing I am contributing to improvements, access to proposals and standards before they are published and insight to trends developing within the Society and on the regulatory front.”

“The desire to give back in return for a rewarding career protecting people, property and the environment.”

“The benefits are tangible—tools, techniques and strategies—and intangible—the knowledge that others face the same issues.”

“Professional recognition, peer networking, increased knowledge, news on current SH&E issues, leadership experience and personal satisfaction. I have received far more in return than I have contributed.”

“The opportunity to work with premier experts in my areas of expertise and to make a safer workplace that the average worker can use and understand.”

“I am at the tail end of my professional career now. As the chair and vice chair of two standards committees, I usually receive more respect and attention from the attendees in my instructor development courses. I think that association with these committees improves the credibility of any individual who professes to be an expert in this field.”

“I am contributing to the SH&E profession in a meaningful way, and I get to associate with the crème de la crème of SH&E professionals.”

“I receive updates that are helpful in my work, and I enjoy contributing to technical discussions with other subject-matter experts. As one of the more senior members, I feel that I am more valuable to new members and to others if I stay engaged in a broader sense. I benefited from my associations, who provided me with important and timely help as I continued to gain knowledge and experience. I like helping members and other colleagues when they ask. They are welcome to any data, knowledge or feedback I can provide.”

“I receive advanced knowledge of pending changes and state-of-the-art knowledge. I also have the opportunity to influence the outcome of standards. I am recognized as a leader in the subject area of the committee, and I make contacts who can be helpful in the future if I am faced with thorny questions.”

“Staying current, networking, peer recognition and contributing to the SH&E profession.”

“I am satisfied knowing I have done my part. I have the opportunity to meet many great people in the SH&E field and am enriched both professionally and personally. I have met some really fun people whom I would consider my friends as well as my colleagues. I have a boatload of resources at my fingertips—information and expertise that would take me hours to find on my own. I have also received some work, both directly and indirectly.”

“Professional development and networking opportunities.”

“1) Building ASSE as the technical source for SH&E professionals. Our profession needs a voice. 2) Working hard to ensure we have SH&E professional positions to champion our vision and goals in protecting, people property and the environment. This is a very noble cause, and we must ensure that we have positions within industry, government and higher education.”

“You can sum up my participation in my father’s words. As he put it, in this life, you have two options. You can either stand on the sidelines and watch the game or you can decide that you want to play the game. There is no shame in either route, but if you choose to simply watch the game, then you should never complain about how the game is played or about the fairness of the game’s outcome. In other words, anyone can complain, but it is the movers and shakers who do something about it.”

“ASSE has provided me with a technical network to which I can reach out for specific topics, it provides a social network with people who are involved in situations similar to mine, and it provides a business network from which I may be able to develop work projects.”

“I have gained a larger network of qualified SH&E professionals, and I can also take advantage of the communications and inner workings of a large association.”

“Like teaching, none of us are in it for the money. It is more the opportunity to network and to share experiences and knowledge with others who share common interests and concerns. Without my activities in ASSE over the years, I never would have had the opportunity to meet countless SH&E professionals.”

“In my role as a practice specialty administrator, I receive satisfaction knowing that the programs under my control have been completed to the best of my capability. My peers recognize my contributions and show their appreciation. Advisory committee members and branch chairs respond positively to my professional approach.”

“Standards development has required me to make great sacrifices. However, the gain far outweighs the loss. Professionally, I gained more than 100-fold in my consulting business.”

“Last year, I was contacted by a father who had told me of the tragic loss of his young son. His son was strangled on a combination home playground apparatus. The unit was a ‘combination’ play unit with rings or horizontal bars over a trapeze unit. He explained that he left the backyard to enter his home for a minute, leaving the boy alone. In that minute, the boy apparently dropped to the trapeze from the upper rings or horizontal bar, which caught him by the neck.

He said he wanted the playground committee to stop manufacturing this type of combination unit to prevent other children from suffering the same fate. He had attended the committee meeting, but the committee, made up mostly of industry playground manufacturers, had told him they felt no need to change the standard. He heard from others that I might be able to help him, as I had fought other standards battles with the steel, floor and wax/polish industries.

The playground committee was to revisit the issue, and the father wanted to know if there was anything I could do. I asked other SH&E professionals to join the committee and to attend the next meeting. I contacted the local television station, and attended the meeting at my own expense. I spoke out and focused my energy on changing the standard. We developed wording that would prevent the future design of combination units.

With a little convincing, the manufacturers (all except the maker of the offending equipment involved) voted to stop the manufacture of such combination trapeze units. The feeling of accomplishment achieved from this work was indescribable. I was just a small part of the outcome, however, the father’s expression of gratitude was truly rewarding. This is why I like standards development. This is what motivates me. I like to use what I know in the SH&E field to make a difference that will help others whom I may never meet.”

“Peer involvement/contacts, professional background enrichment and the satisfaction of contributing to a larger audience.”

“I have received many networking opportunities that might not otherwise have been available to me. And though I am not in it for awards, receiving the Safety Professional of the Year award has been a highlight in my life.”

“I have time on my hands, so it gives me more to keep my mind fresh. I have a better understanding of what CoPS staff accomplishes, and region newsletters are easy to format with little knowledge of the process.”

“I look at this as continuing education and a resource for my own business. In addition, I like the people and have made many friends.”

“The new information I have gained by participating with other SH&E professionals has allowed me to expand my knowledge and relationships to advance in my career.”

“Networking with others who share a common interest is a benefit I personally receive. Serving ASSE is a factor as well.”

“I have met many more members whom I hope will develop my intellectual knowledge, professional relationships and friendships.”

“My horizons are expanded and I continue to grow; I meet many great people who believe in the same things I do, which creates opportunities for new acquaintances and friendships; and I get to travel and meet new people and see new places. It is an adventure that continues to enrich my life.”

“In the many organizations in which I participate, I prefer a role that is less in the limelight. However, from a professional status, having one’s name listed in a standard boosts one’s standing in the industry. It is with great pride that I have on my desk the clock representing the Charles V. Culbertson Outstanding Volunteer Service award. The main thing is to be part of something and to see it develop, grow or prosper for others to see, use or enjoy in the future. Passing something on to others.”

“Primarily personal satisfaction for the work I have done to grow the practice specialties. I hope my new employer has a better attitude toward my participation, but that remains to be seen. I have been told they appreciate the visibility and recognition for them, but apparently not to the point where they will give me time off (without taking vacation days) to participate in required meetings.”