

Special Government Employees in the DoD

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) created the [Special Government Employee \(SGE\) Program](#) to further foster partnerships 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 at your organization.



OSHA utilizes SGEs during VPP approval on-site assessments, outreach, and other compliance activities. Image retrieved from [OSHA](#).

WHAT IS A SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE?

An SGE is a “qualified volunteer” who supports OSHA personnel assess an organization’s safety and occupational health management systems (SOHMS) 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 improvements in the safety and health (S&H) field.

An SGE is an individual 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
- Skills to conduct interviews and site walkthroughs during an on-site OSHA VPP assessment.



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HOW DO I BECOME A SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE?

To become an SGE, you must:

- Work (or recently worked) full-time at a VPP Star site for at least two 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-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 SOHMS
- 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 qualifying activities during their SGE term. **You must participate in at least one 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 work with their Regional OSHA VPP Manager to choose the qualifying activities aligning with their skill set.

Note: you must complete these qualifying activities to be reapproved as an SGE at the end of your three-year term.



The image illustrates SGEs and OSHA personnel working together during an on-site assessment. Image retrieved from Bing Images (Creative Commons).

HOW DO I FIND FUNDING?

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

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 a chance to win the SGE of the Year Award
4. Greater understanding of the VPP requirements
5. Better understanding of regional VPP expectations, which is helpful for VPP recertification
6. Opportunity to gather, share, and implement best practices
7. Support the DoD and Star site's commitment to having a world-class SOHMS

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