



Texas Radiation Advisory Board

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Position Statement on The Shortage of Radiation Protection Specialists

Radiation Protection Specialists, also known as Health Physicists, are essential to several areas of operations in the State of Texas. Both technicians and degreed individuals are needed to ensure the radiation protection of employees and the public in the following areas:

- State-regulatory agencies
- Hospitals and medical facilities
- Nuclear power plants
- Educational facilities
- Research laboratories
- Oil and gas well drilling, well analysis (logging), and oil refineries
- Industrial Radiography
- Radioactive waste processing and disposal facilities
- Uranium mining and milling

Health Physicists (HPs), need to be trained in radiation physics, biology, instrumentation, chemistry, and regulations. This rigorous training often limits the number of people willing to seek work in the radiation protection field. Additionally, the means to train interested individuals has been reduced over the last few years at Texas A&M University, Texas State Technical College, and educational facilities within the state. Generally, most HPs are drawn from other related fields, such as engineers, environmentalists, safety professionals, and scientists. These individuals can be trained on the job or be enrolled in short radiation-protection classes paid for by their employers.

With the ever-expanding uses of radiation in (1) medical applications, (2) nuclear power to meet carbon-free energy needs, (3) drilling and mining operations, and (4) radioactive waste disposal in Texas, it is necessary to keep up with the increasing demand for Radiation Protection Specialists. A shortage of qualified Radiation Protection Specialists will compromise the State's rigorous oversight necessary for the continued radiation safety needed for its beneficial use for the citizens of Texas.

The Health Physics Society says. "A projected shortfall in sufficiently educated radiation safety professionals (Radiation Protection Specialists) has placed a burden on industries using radiation to support our nation's energy, security, and health needs. This national shortage is primarily due to a lack of funding for academic research and educational health physics programs. Another concern is the anticipated large number of radiation safety personnel (Radiation Protection Specialists) reaching retirement age in the near future."

The Texas Radiation Advisory Board advocates the State's financial support for the recruitment, training, and education of Radiation Protection Specialists by:

1. Promoting academic programs for degrees in Radiation Protection
2. Promoting on-the-job training and educational classes for potential Radiation Protection Specialists
3. Promoting State agencies to encourage more people to enter the Radiation Protection field, with salaries comparable to federal agencies and the private sector
4. Promoting Private Sector cooperation in funding more training for potential and current Radiation Protection Specialists

References:

[Nuclear Regulatory Commission - Building Capacity for Our Radiation Protection Future, March 2022](#)

[Health Physics Society - Human Capital Crisis](#)

[Health Physics Society - Human Capital Crisis in Radiation Position Statement, Sept. 2014](#)

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