

The CHP Corner, August 2019

For CHPs, aspiring CHPs, and anyone else on the bell curve



The American Academy of Health Physics

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EDITOR'S CORNER: *CHERNOBYL* HYPE; THE TRUTH IS SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE

Dan Sowers, CHP Corner Editor

If you're like me, the negative hype and stigma surrounding anything nuclear or involving radiation is frustrating at the minimum (let's revisit this thought at the end of this month's Corner). I have yet to view HBO's show *Chernobyl*, classified as a "drama miniseries" and not a documentary; however, I have received plenty of questions about the validity of the show's dramatized events. I admit my historical Chernobyl understanding was rather limited up until a few months ago. I got up to speed on my Chernobyl disaster knowledge through reading *Chernobyl* by S Ploky, *Midnight in Chernobyl* by A Higginbotham, and *Voices from Chernobyl* by S Alexievich.

Realizing a historical account of the Chernobyl disaster cannot be published without including some amount of emotion, and therefore potential bias, Ploky and Higginbotham provide an excellent step-by-step account of the buildup and unfolding of the accident. The two authors paint some of the key operators, managers, and politicians into slightly dissimilar levels of guilt and responsibility for the accident and following events. I enjoyed this varying view between the two books as I am fully aware two or more sides of any story always exist. They go into detail about the communication obstructions purposely put into place and the mismanagement of evacuations. They outline the lack of personal protective equipment and lack of information regarding radiological hazards afforded to firefighters, military, and liquidators ordered to clean up the site. Ploky narrates excellent discussions of the psycho-social effects following the accident as well. Alexievich would go on to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for her work interviewing hundreds of people affected by the Chernobyl accident. The above-mentioned drama miniseries *Chernobyl* is in fact based on her work. The book itself is a moving collection of personal narratives and is ripe with raw emotion: anger, fear, frustration...and hope. It is a short read and several interview quotes, especially those from children, will stick with the reader forever (for better or for worse). For a more abbreviated summary of the Chernobyl accident and links to other references, the HPS has an article on their Ask the Experts portal. Check it out [here](#).

Anyone else read any good books lately? Send me your recommendations and short book reviews at dsowers430@gmail.com.

2019 HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY SALARY SURVEY

Gary Lauten

For the last several years, the American Academy of Health Physics has conducted an annual CHP Salary Survey. This is the twelfth year the survey has been expanded to include the entire HPS membership, and we ask for your participation in completing it. To participate in the survey, log in to your HPS account and click the blue button under "Resources for You" or follow this [link](#). If you have any comments, questions, or problems with the survey please contact [Gary Lauten](#), CHP, and not the HPS website webmaster.

CERTIFICATION BY THE AMERICAN BOARD OF MEDICAL PHYSICS

Kevin Buckley and Steven King

The American Board of Medical Physics (ABMP) offers a certification in Medical Health Physics primarily aimed at physicists actively working in a hospital environment and who are aware of the functions of a medical radiation safety officer. The exam consists of 3 parts: part 1 is a multiple choice general physics exam that is similar to part 1 of the CHP exam; part 2 is a multiple choice exam with questions designed to test areas that medical health physicists encounter; and part 3 is an oral exam given by a panel of 3 ABMP certified physicists. If a candidate is a CHP, that person can skip parts 1 and 2 and proceed to part 3 if they meet the experience requirements listed in the [ABMP website](#). Other specific requirements include:

1. Evidence of a graduate degree in physics, medical physics, or another appropriate and related field, from an accredited university;
2. Sufficient experience in the field of medical health physics, as determined by the ABMP Board of Directors;
3. Two endorsements of appropriate experience, one from a board certified medical physicist and one from a board certified physician;
4. Attestation of experience required by 10 CFR 35.50, Training for Radiation Safety Officers.

Direct any ABMP certification questions to Steven King (sking@psu.edu) or Kevin Buckley (kevinbuckley49@comcast.net).

HPS POSITION STATEMENT: WHAT IS AN HP?

Dan Sowers, CHP Corner Editor

The HPS is engaged in health physics title protection, with the most recent accomplishment in the release of their position statement [What is an HP?](#) While the AAHP purposely does not get involved in taking positions, the HPS does, and ultimately we benefit from this. It is clear most of us struggle answering the question: “What do you do for work?” Or the questions: “What is health physics...and what is a health physicist?” A web search for answers to those questions yields a plethora of results and definitions. I encourage you all to use the definition from the Position Statement so our profession becomes wholly aligned:

“Health physics, also referred to as the science of radiation protection, is the profession devoted to protecting people and their environment from potential radiation hazards, while making it possible to enjoy the beneficial uses of radiation.”

If you have a different definition at your worksite or on your website, consider updating it to this definition! You can (and should!) review the entire Position Statement [here](#).

...And as promised in the opening article, I fight my frustration by getting involved in the HPS and the AAHP as much as my schedule allows. Through work with the Academy, the HPS’ Public Information Committee, giving talks at HPS conferences, and other routes, this active participation in issues larger than one person provides the outreach and education avenues from which we all benefit! I encourage all readers to get involved in whatever way(s) you can – after all, our profession, our Society, and our Academy are what WE make of them. How can you get involved? Send me an email at dsowers430@gmail.com and I’ll help match your interests with committees and projects!