



ENGINEER PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2022 Council of Captains

EPAC Council of Captains

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The Council of Captains, along with Chief Professional Officer RDML Emil Wang, serve as the designated leaders of the engineer category. The council is a resource for guidance, mentorship, and feedback. The council maintains an understanding of the broad array of challenges that face the Corps' diversely assigned engineers and supports the CPO's initiatives to guide the category.

CAPT Varsha Savalia, MS

Liaison, PHS Commissioned Corps Operations
Assistant Secretary Preparedness and Response (ASPR)

CAPT Varsha Savalia is the ASPR PHS Commissioned Corps Liaison stationed in San Antonio, Texas. She joined the Corps in 2004 and worked at FDA prior to joining Office of Secretary.

Prior to joining federal government, CAPT Savalia was in the private sector at Johnson and Johnson (J&J), where she developed a prototype of sugar-free food products using Splenda and analyzed diet products for sweetness level.

CAPT Savalia started her federal career in the field as an investigator with FDA's Southwest Imports District in Nogales, AZ in 2002. She then spent a decade at FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) in the Office of Radiological Health and Office of Compliance as Subject Matter Expert and Compliance Officer to ensure imported and domestic medical device and radiological health products were safe and effective. CAPT Savalia's work at the FDA also includes positions in the Division of IT Systems as System Analyst and Office of Training and Education Division as Training Officer. Highlights of CAPT Savalia's over 19 years at the FDA included: helping stand-up the San Luis Port of Entry and Prior Notice Center; refusal and detention of violative, imported commodities to prevent it from entering commerce; reclassification of indoor tanning beds to require more stringent regulatory requirements and ban use by minors; providing support on compliance case for violative medical devices; helping build imports screening tools; helping determine a food national curriculum standard and assisting with the standardization of egg inspections with federal and state programs; and food, imports, radiological health and imports course developments.

CAPT Savalia has served as a voting member of EPAC as well as the Awards Subcommittee Chair. She served co-chair of Training and Education Subcommittees with JOAG and APAOC. She was the Membership Chair for CCWIAB, SAME Mid-Maryland Post and Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department. CAPT Savalia is the Engineering Camps Coordinator for SAME San Antonio Post. She served on the RDF-1 Team as well as the SAT 5 team and has deployed for numerous responses: Presidential Inauguration, 4th of July Event, State of the Union Address, several hurricanes, tornadoes, unaccompanied minors' mission, and COVID-related deployments.

CAPT Savalia holds an MS in Health Sciences and dual BS/BS degrees in Engineering as well as a graduate certificate in Global Health. She truly enjoys mentoring and helping people to achieve their full potential. Her hobbies include judging at MATHCOUNTS and science fairs, assisting SAME E&C Camps with mentors, local STEM events, volunteering at food bank, and supporting veterans' events.

CAPT Savalia's family includes her husband, Doug and cat, Pesty. They are patrons of the arts and supporters of local, live theater performances and concerts as well as the museums. They love exploring new areas and traveling.



CAPT Duane Hammond, MS, PE

Mechanical Engineer/Team Leader
Engineering Design and Evaluation Team
Division of Field Studies and Engineering
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



CAPT Duane R. Hammond is a mechanical engineer and lead of the Engineering Design and Evaluation Team in the Engineering and Physical Hazards Branch, Division of Field Studies and Engineering at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He has been with CDC/NIOSH since 2002 and has a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, an M.S. in Industrial Engineering, and is a licensed professional engineer. His primary research focus has been developing and evaluating engineering control technologies to protect workers from occupational exposures to chemical, biological, and radiological hazards.

Since joining NIOSH in 2002, he has led engineering studies aimed at preventing silica exposures in highway construction workers, preventing styrene exposures at boat manufacturing plants, preventing ultrafine particle exposures during additive manufacturing, and preventing carbon monoxide exposures in boating and at ice hockey rinks. He has also contributed to projects such as preventing worker exposures to acrylamide in surface coal preparation plants, preventing radon exposures in caves, preventing dust exposures in bread plants and in wind turbine blade manufacturing, preventing hexavalent chromium (CrVI), hexamethylene diisocyanate (HDI), methyl isobutyl ketone (MIBK) exposures during aircraft painting operations, and evaluating particulate containment at nanotechnology workplaces.

He has also participated in deployments and emergency response activities while at CDC/NIOSH. For example, he led several CDC/NIOSH projects to evaluate ventilation and filtration along with biohazard detection system controls in United States Postal Service Processing and Distribution Centers following the 2001 anthrax attacks. From 2004 to 2008, he assisted with the CDC/NIOSH response to evaluate ventilation systems following tuberculosis outbreaks at homeless shelters, food packing plants, and on a cruise ship. He participated in the CDC/NIOSH response to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and in preparing US hospitals to receive Ebola patients during the 2014-2015 outbreaks in western Africa. In 2018, he was sent to Guyana, South America to evaluate mercury contamination and removal systems at several facilities at the request of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). In 2020-2022, he served in multiple COVID-19 response roles including a field deployment to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in early February of 2020, three 30-day virtual deployments as lead of the CDC Health Systems and Worker Safety Task Force /Worker Safety and Health Team, a 45-day virtual deployment as Deputy of CDC's Vaccine Task Force/ Essential Worker Team, and an ongoing assignment as the CDC/NIOSH lead representative to the White House led Presidential Interagency Task Force (PITF) Working Group on Reducing Disease Transmission in the Built Environment.

CAPT Martin E. Casey, MS

Life Safety Program Manager
Division of Continuing and Acute Care Providers
Center for Clinical Standards and Quality
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

CAPT Martin Casey serves as the Life Safety Program Manager in the Division of Continuing and Acute Care Providers within the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in Baltimore, MD. He serves as the national subject matter expert for acute care facility physical environment and fire protection requirements. In this capacity he develops national regulation, policy and guidelines, and provides guidance to CMS management, CMS regional offices, state survey agencies, accreditation organizations, health care providers and suppliers, industry professionals, and other stakeholders to support compliance with CMS requirements for participation in Medicare and Medicaid programs. In addition, he provides oversight of twenty-two CMS-approved health care facility accreditation organization programs and manages the CMS national life safety training program.

CAPT Casey is the recipient of several awards including the PHS Engineer of the Year Award, NSPE Federal Engineer of the Year for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and JOAG Officer of the Year Award. In addition, CAPT Casey has received several CMS Administrator awards and nominations for achievements and teamwork.

CAPT Casey received his Master of Science degree in Water Resources and Environmental Engineering from Villanova University, and is a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager, RC14001/RCMS Lead Auditor and a Certified Fire Inspector. He has been employed both domestically and internationally in various capacities as a civil, environmental, and fire protection engineer since 1998.



CAPT Jennifer Caparoso, MS, PE

Environmental Engineer
Sector Policies and Programs Division
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

CAPT Jennifer Caparoso was commissioned as an U.S. Public Health Service Officer almost 20 years ago. She was first assigned to the Office of Health and Safety at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia where she served with a team that assured compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations. CAPT Caparoso's next assignment was with the U.S. Army Public Health Command Region – Europe which provides comprehensive public health services. She currently serves in the Sector Policies and Programs Division at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina whose mission includes developing regulations to reduce air pollution from stationary sources.



CAPT Caparoso received a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a Master of Science degree in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. She is a registered Professional Engineer in Georgia. She lives in Cary, North Carolina and is supported by her husband and two children. They enjoy living in the southeast and exploring various outdoor activities and sports from the mountains to the beach.

CAPT Jennifer Mosser, MS, PE, CHP

Quality Assurance Manager & Senior Science Advisor
Office of Radiation and Indoor Air
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

CAPT Jennifer Mosser is the Quality Assurance Manager and Senior Science Advisor for the Office of Radiation and Indoor Air (ORIA) at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Washington, DC. In ORIA, CAPT Mosser is responsible for the quality of all ORIA data operations, which includes a national environmental radiation monitoring network; responding to radiological emergencies and emergencies that impact indoor air quality (including response to SARS-CoV-2); regulation and oversight of federal facilities managing and disposing of transuranic radioactive waste, high-level waste and spent nuclear fuel; and addressing other public health threats from exposure to indoor air pollutants such as those caused by wildfires. She is on a task group of the International Commission on Radiological Protection that is updating guidance for managing exposures from radiation emergencies and malicious events.



Prior to coming to the EPA, CAPT Mosser worked at the U.S. Public Health Service Headquarters in Rockville, MD. There she served as a Senior Policy Advisor where she conducted research and developed standards and policies for the Corps. Her first assignment was at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Morgantown, WV. There she conducted workplace assessments to determine if workers were exposed to hazardous materials or harmful conditions and recommended ways to reduce hazards and prevent work-related illness.

CAPT Mosser is the former Team Commander for the U.S. Public Health Service Applied Public Health Team #3 which provided essential engineering and environmental health services during public health emergencies. She has responded to many disasters and accidents for both PHS and EPA. Throughout her career, CAPT Mosser has been an active supporter of the engineer category and has served as EPAC Chair, Chair of the EPAC Career Development, Rules and Leadership Development Seminar subcommittees, and as a senior editor of the engineer newsletter.

CAPT Mosser received her Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from West Virginia University and a Master of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Virginia Tech. She is a Nuclear Quality Assurance Lead Auditor, a Certified Health Physicist and a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Maryland. Jen enjoys spending time with her wonderful family, hiking with her dogs, keeping bees and volunteering at a raptor rehabilitation center.

CAPT Josh Simms, MSE

Director

Office of Emergency Operations

U.S. Food and Drug Administration



CAPT Simms began his PHS career in 2002, at the rank of Lieutenant (junior grade), with the Indian Health Service (IHS) Sanitation Facilities Construction in Window Rock, AZ. Throughout his USPHS Commissioned Corps career at IHS and FDA, he served in numerous roles of increasing responsibility as a field engineer, facility engineer, administrative officer, regulatory operations officer, branch chief, and his current position as Office Director for FDA's Office of Emergency Operations. He leads a diverse emergency coordination staff which manages emergency situations and incidents involving critical human and veterinary medicines, biological products, medical devices, radiation emitting products, and the Nation's food supply. This work is of national and international importance, and involves complex coordination across FDA, the Department, and other governmental and private organizations during emergency situations.

CAPT Simms has been active in engineer category activities, including serving as a 2-term voting member on the Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) and EPAC Information Subcommittee Chair. He continues to be an active mentor to junior officers. His PHS deployment experience includes Hurricanes Isaac, Matthew, Harvey, Irma, Maria, and Commander for the Minneapolis RAM mission. CAPT Simms is a graduate of the University of Toledo with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering and Master of Science in Engineering.

CAPT Kenneth J. Fitzgerald, PE, PMP, MSE

Deputy Director

Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction

Phoenix Area Office

Indian Health Service



CAPT Kenneth Fitzgerald, P.E., PMP, MSE, is the Deputy Director, Sanitation Facilities Construction Branch, Phoenix Area responsible for providing water, wastewater, and solid waste technical assistance to 47 direct service tribes in Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and California. Upon his call to active duty in the United States Air Force, at the rank of Second Lieutenant, he was stationed at multiple Air Force bases, serving in multiple positions including airfield & transportation design, base infrastructure design for missile alert facilities and missile sites, base operation and maintenance and disaster preparedness/readiness officer. After receiving an honorable discharge after 5 years of service, he was a direct hire as a civil/environmental engineer by a self-governing tribe. He served as the environmental health division chief, responsible for facilities construction & maintenance, transportation, water & wastewater utility, environmental health services and sanitation facilities construction. Upon his call to active duty in 2005 at the rank of Lieutenant, CAPT Fitzgerald was assigned to IHS. Throughout his USPHS Commissioned Corps career, he has served in roles with increasing responsibilities as a field engineer, senior field engineer, District Engineer, Acting Sanitation Facilities Construction Director, and Deputy Director providing technical assistance including planning, design, project management, and construction management of water/wastewater/solid waste projects for Phoenix Area Tribal communities.

CAPT Fitzgerald has been active as an active mentor to junior engineers, served on the commissioned corps awards board, working group leader in the development of the Chief Engineer's blog for the Information Subcommittee. His deployment experience included deployment to Hurricane Gustave as part of the IRCT Region VIII Contingent. His individual and unit awards include USPHS SAME Cumming Award, Unit Commendation Medal, Commendation Medal, Achievement Medal, Special Assignment Award, Hazardous Duty Award, Crisis Response Service Award, Isolated Hardship award and COVID-19 Pandemic Campaign Medal.

CAPT Steven Scherling, ME

Deputy Director
Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction
Bemidji Area Office
Indian Health Service



CAPT Steven Scherling is the Deputy Director for the Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction in the Indian Health Service's Bemidji Area. In this position, he supports the program to improve public health for Native Americans through coordination with funding partners, administering data systems, assisting with regulatory oversight, and leading staff to ensure successful completion of construction projects and utilization of sanitation facilities. The Bemidji Area Division of Sanitation Facilities utilizes three dozen engineers and technical support staff to serve 25,000 households in 34 tribes across three states. The typical field engineer in this division coordinates sanitation facility support for multiple tribes while managing ten or more active construction projects, including duties such as land surveys, pilot studies, design, regulations, contracting, and project management.

CAPT Scherling has over 15 years of experience in program and project management in various positions with the Indian Health Service. He began as a field engineer in 2006, and took positions of increasing responsibility, leading the Minnesota District for 8 years in the last decade. During that time, the district enhanced collaboration with tribes, increased resource efficiency, and initiated tracking techniques to improve key project quality metrics, including project deficiency reports, project durations, and project closeouts.

CAPT Scherling was first commissioned in 1999 as a nuclear engineering officer in the US Navy. He served over five years, including five strategic missile submarine deployments. A licensed Professional Engineer, he also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Florida and a Master's of Engineering Management from Old Dominion University. He enjoys encountering new experiences, especially ones which he can participate in with his family. He credits all personal and professional success he has achieved to the divine support provided to him through his supervisors, coworkers, staff, and family.

CAPT Gretchen Cowman, DrPH, PE

Branch Chief
Laboratory Design and Construction
National Institutes of Health

CAPT Gretchen Cowman is an engineer at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, where she leads the laboratory design and construction program. Prior to joining the NIH in 2018, she spent 9 years working overseas with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as the Deputy Country Director in Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso and as a Branch Chief in Kenya. In her work with the CDC, she managed the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and Global Health Security Agenda programs. One achievement she is particularly proud of is construction of Kenya's National Public Health Laboratory in Nairobi.



She began her Public Health Service career with the Indian Health Service in 2001 on the Navajo Nation where she provided first-time water and sanitation facilities to families living in remote communities in Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. She deployed to support the 2021 Unaccompanied Children Mission in Texas, the 2020 COVID-19 Response Mission on the Navajo Nation, the 2019 Ebola Response Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the 2014 Ebola Response Mission in Sierra Leone.

Before joining the Public Health Service, she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zimbabwe from 1995 to 1999 where she taught science in a rural secondary school. Prior to that she served as an AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity on the coast of North Carolina.

CAPT Cowman is a registered professional engineer in the state of New Mexico. She has a masters and doctorate in public health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Washington University in St. Louis. On the weekends she enjoys hiking and exploring Washington, DC.

CAPT Tracy D. Gilchrist, MS, PE, PMP

Project Manager
Denver Service Center
National Park Service

Captain Gilchrist is a 29-year Engineer Officer in the United States Public Health Service. Since 2007, he has served with the National Park Service's Denver Service Center. In this position, CAPT Gilchrist has managed and completed the design and construction of infrastructure and other capital improvement projects across the United States including Arizona, California, Hawaii, New Jersey, Washington, and Washington, DC.

From January 2006 through January 2007, Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Gilchrist volunteered to be the Deputy Health Attaché for the US Department of State in the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad, Iraq. While managing the ~\$800 million health sector reconstruction portfolio, he provided policy assistance, project and funding approvals, and on-site project assessments. Additionally, his expertise enabled him to act as a US Government representative on national healthcare issues impacting the Government of Iraq, through the Ministry of Health.

From 2001 through 2005, LCDR Gilchrist served as the Park Engineer at the National Park Service's Point Reyes National Seashore in Northern California. As the assistant to the Facilities Manager, he managed the Park's infrastructure and capital improvement construction projects. He also assisted in overseeing the division's day-to-day facility operations

Prior to 2001, CAPT Gilchrist served with the Indian Health Service. From 1999 to 2001 as a Senior Environmental Engineer on the Navajo Reservation, stationed in Shiprock, New Mexico. From 1994 to 1999, as an Environmental Engineer on the Tohono O'odham Reservation in Tucson, Arizona. In both positions, he was responsible for identifying sanitation deficiencies, completing associated the designs, and managing the construction of the related water and wastewater facilities.

He holds a Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering, University of Arizona and a Master of Science, Civil Engineering, University of New Mexico. He is a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Arizona and a certified Project Management Professional.

CAPT Gilchrist lives with his wife of thirty-three years, Stephanie, and appreciates spending time with his 29-year-old son, Eli. He enjoys riding motorcycles, hiking, camping, and fishing.

