

WHAT IS AN INDUSTRIAL HYGIENISTS?

Mike Plagge is Manager of Environmental Health and Safety for ConAgra Foods. He is trained as an Industrial Hygienist and is focused on employee work safety and corporate environmental responsibility. Plagge explained that as a food processing company ConAgra has many areas of concern for employee work safety. These include dust from grain milling and spice blending, high concentrations of flavoring chemicals, high noise levels, temperature extremes due to cooking and freezing, high carbon dioxide levels, fumes from stainless steel welding, and chemicals in machinery cleaning agents. As an international company, Plagge noted, ConAgra has extra challenges in some countries because of cultural apathy toward employee safety and environmental issues. Plagge stated his work is challenging and always interesting because of the many issues within the food processing business. He emphasized that knowledge in the field of chemistry is very important to understand the impact of higher concentrations of materials in the work environment.