

2025 NIH Mission First Safety Always Award Guidelines and Criteria

Nomination Period

Nominations will be accepted from March 1 through April 10, 2026.

Submission

Nominations may be submitted using the electronic 2025 NIH Mission First Safety Always Award (MFSAA)

Nomination Form found on the ORS/DOHS Intranet at

<https://ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/Events/SafetyAwards/Pages/NIH-Mission-First,-Safety-Always.aspx>.

Staff without access to a computer may contact the MFSAA Committee at 301-451-3291 or in person in Building 13, Suite 3K04.

Nomination Process

All NIH Staff (including contractors and fellows) may nominate NIH colleagues for the Mission First Safety Always Award.

- The response to each of the two (minimum) practical examples must be 100 words or less.
- The nominee can be any NIH employee (including contractors and fellows except Division of Safety personnel).
- Self-nominations for individual or group awards are not permitted.
- Nominations submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Group nominations are limited to 20 individuals. Groups must include a minimum of one federal employee.

Justifications

Describe how the nominee meets the selection criteria for the award category using specific examples of work performed during the calendar year 2025 (January – December 2025). The narrative must focus on the nominee's distinct contributions, including how they exceeded normal expectations and the specific impact of their contributions. Specifically state which two of the five categories the nomination addresses. Routine responsibilities should only be mentioned as they establish a context for the accomplishment cited. For group awards, the justification should include specific information on group's contribution and/or impact on the project.

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Selection Criteria

Nominees must demonstrate safety leadership, with practical examples in two or more of the following areas:

1. Leadership attributes that set the nominee apart from his or her peers.
2. Initiating and/or leading a successful safety initiative.
3. Engaging peers and transforming the safety culture of the organization.
4. Promoting safety as an important part of your program.
5. Working to correct unsafe or unhealthful workplace conditions or hazards.

Selection Process

Award nominations will be reviewed and scored by a panel comprised of a chair and four members.

Selection Criteria and Description

1. Leadership attributes that set the nominee apart from his or her peers.
 - a. Provide practical example(s) of leadership attributes.
 - b. The narrative must focus on the nominee's distinct contributions, including how they exceeded normal expectations and the specific impact of their contributions.
 - c. Safety leadership is more than overseeing the general day-to-day of your organization's safety program. Leading is about influencing employees and colleagues to meet the goals of your organization and safely fulfill their roles. Attributes can be professional skills, areas of expertise, personal qualities, or any relevant and impressive accomplishments that demonstrate safety leadership.
2. Initiating and/or leading a successful safety initiative.
 - a. Provide practical example(s) of safety initiative(s) that had a significant impact.
 - b. The narrative must focus on the nominee's distinct contributions, including how they exceeded normal expectations and the specific impact of their contributions.
 - c. Safety initiatives refer to a situation or an employee's condition to not just simply work in a standard safety environment but are also contributing ideas and are proactive in increasing the standard of safety in their work environment.

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3. Engaging peers and transforming the safety culture of the organization.
 - a. Provide practical example(s) of peer engagement.
 - b. The narrative must focus on the nominee's distinct contributions, including how they exceeded normal expectations and the specific impact of their contributions.
 - c. A safe work culture comes from everyone paying attention to the details of what goes on in the work environment and employees having the passion and energy to get involved and do something about what they see, hear and experience.
4. Promoting safety as an important part of your program.
 - a. Provide practical example(s) of nominee's role in promoting safety.
 - b. The narrative must focus on the nominee's distinct contributions, including how they exceeded normal expectations and the specific impact of their contributions.
 - c. Safety culture can be defined as the collection of the beliefs, perceptions and values that employees share in relation to risks within an organization, such as a workplace or community. Beyond individual responsibilities, a wider organizational vision can create a sense of bonding and common purpose among workers. When people understand that their actions can either hurt or protect other workers, there is generally a healthier workplace safety culture.
5. Working to correct unsafe or unhealthful workplace conditions or hazards.
 - a. Provide practical example(s) of unsafe or unhealthy conditions or hazards that were investigated and/or corrected due to nominee's actions.
 - b. The narrative must focus on the nominee's distinct contributions, including how they exceeded normal expectations and the specific impact of their contributions.
 - c. Unsafe conditions are hazardous physical conditions or circumstances which could directly lead to the occurrence of an accident/incident.