



NEWS RELEASE

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GENERAL ELECTRIC DRIVES AND CONTROLS IN SALEM, VIRGINIA, RECEIVES THEIR FIFTH “STAR” DESIGNATION UNDER THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY’S VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM

RICHMOND, VA – Commissioner C. Ray Davenport announced today that the General Electric Drives and Controls in Salem, Virginia, has been re-approved as a STAR Worksite under Virginia’s Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP), the program’s highest level of recognition. The facility was honored with their fifth Certificate of Recognition issued on May 31, 2017. The site was first certified as a VPP Star Worksite on August 27, 1996.

“The management and employees of General Electric Drives and Controls in Salem have demonstrated a tremendous passion for the safety and health of their employees”, said Commissioner Davenport. “I congratulate General Electric Drives and Controls for embodying the cooperative spirit of VPP, and applaud them on their hard earned recertification as a Virginia STAR Worksite.”

The General Electric Drives and Controls Salem site’s commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace for its employees is demonstrated by its low injury and illness rates. The General Electric facility has a total three-year average for the TCIR (Total Case Incident Rate for injuries and illnesses) of 1.62 compared with a Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) national rate of 1.8 for this industry, representing a TCIR rate 10% lower than the national average for the industry. The site’s three-year average DART rate (Days Away, Restricted, or Transferred) for

injury and illness cases is 0.43, compared with the 1.1 national rate, which is 61% below the national average for the industry.

As part of the recognition for achieving STAR status under VPP, the worksite is entitled to fly the VPP "STAR Worksite" flag. The General Electric Drives and Controls site is one of two General Electric VPP STAR sites in Virginia and currently one of eighty-nine for General Electric in the United States. VPP includes two levels of participation, Merit and STAR, with STAR being the highest. Similar voluntary protection programs are conducted in other states across the country.

The process for reaching STAR status is extensive to ensure that only the very best programs qualify. Since the inception of Virginia's VPP in 1996, only 67 STAR worksites have been recognized, and only 43 Virginia worksites currently retain the STAR/Merit designation. General Electric has set a standard of excellence that is second to none.

In Virginia VPP, a cooperative relationship is formed between the VOSH program, the employer, and employees which include the agreement of company leaders to operate exceptional safety and health management systems that meet a rigorous set of occupational safety and health criteria. Employers agree to voluntarily participate in the program and to directly involve employees in all aspects of the company's safety and health management systems. Requirements include an extensive application process, submission of written safety and health policies and procedures, demonstration of successful implementation of those programs through injury and illness rates that are below the national average for the employer's industry, and an intensive weeklong inspection by a team of VPP experts.

Businesses that participate in VPP substantially improve safety and health protections for thousands of Virginia employees through cooperative efforts to reduce injuries, illnesses, and fatal accidents. VPP STAR sites regularly report decreased bottom line costs associated with dramatically reduced injury and illness rates (an average of over 60% below the respective industry average), and improved productivity and employee morale. Reducing private sector employer costs associated with injuries, illnesses, and fatal accidents enhances a company's

economic viability and competitiveness, and increases available capital for reinvestment, expansion, and new hiring.

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry offers two voluntary protection recognition programs, the [Virginia Voluntary Protection Program](#) (VVPP) generally for larger employers and the [Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program](#) (SHARP) for businesses of 250 employees or fewer. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at www.doli.virginia.gov or for VPP - contact Milford Stern, VPP Program Manager at (540) 562-3580, ext. 123 or Milford.Stern@doli.virginia.gov; and for SHARP – contact Dennis Edwards, Consultation Program Manager at (804) 786-8707 or Dennis.Edwards@doli.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry also offers [On-Site Consultation Services](#) to help employers better understand and voluntarily comply with VOSH standards. Priority is given to high hazard workplaces with 250 or fewer employees and all services are offered to employers at no cost. On-Site Consultation Services helps employers identify and correct potential safety and health hazards through walk-through surveys (without citations or penalties), provide abatement advice, provide on-site training, and provide program assistance to develop safety and health programs. Additional information about On-Site Consultation Services can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at www.doli.virginia.gov or by contacting Dennis Edwards, Consultation Program Manager at (804) 786-8707 or Dennis.Edwards@doli.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program is financed with 50% state funds and 50% federal funds in the form of a grant from the U. S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), under §23(g) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

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