

# National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

**Mission.** The mission of NIOSH is to generate new knowledge in the field of occupational safety and health and to transfer that knowledge into practice for the betterment of workers. To accomplish this mission, NIOSH conducts scientific research, develops guidance and authoritative recommendations, disseminates information, and responds to requests for workplace health hazard evaluations. In pursuit of its mission, NIOSH conducts the following program activities.

**National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA).** In 1996, NIOSH launched NORA, an innovative public-private partnership to establish priorities for occupational safety and health research both at NIOSH and throughout the country. NIOSH serves as the steward of the NORA and facilitates the work of stakeholder-driven NORA Sector Councils, which have developed roadmaps to direct research and service activities in each sector.

**Moving Research into Practice.** Through its Research to Practice (r2p) Initiative, NIOSH works closely with partners to transfer and translate research findings, technologies, and information into highly effective prevention practices and products that can be adopted immediately in the workplace.

**Prevention through Design (PtD).** PtD helps engineers and architects, employers, owners, and others to recognize design issues that affect worker safety and to incorporate safe design, equipment, and work practices early in the design process, and as new facilities are built or existing ones are renovated.

**WorkLife Initiative.** The NIOSH WorkLife Initiative is working to sustain and improve worker health through better work-based programs, policies, and practices. This is a new approach to occupational safety and health and reflects a growing appreciation of the complexity of influences on worker health and of the interactions between work-based and non-work factors.

**Health Hazard Evaluation Program (HHE).** HHE scientists conduct workplace assessments to determine if workers are exposed to hazardous materials or harmful conditions and whether these exposures are affecting worker health. NIOSH evaluates the workplace environment and the health of employees by reviewing records and conducting on-site environmental sampling, epidemiologic surveys, and medical testing.

## Protecting Those Who Serve.

- ▶ **Fire Fighters:** Every year, about 105 fire fighters die in the line of duty across the U.S. NIOSH conducts investigations of many of these deaths. NIOSH's Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation Program has made over 1,000 recommendations arising from over 300 investigations since its inception in 1998.
- ▶ **Energy Workers.** NIOSH conducts an occupational energy research program to more fully understand radiation cancer risk factors in radiation exposed workers and to recommend improved protective measures. NIOSH is also responsible for determining occupational radiation exposure for workers with cancer who are eligible for compensation under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000.
- ▶ **Emergency Responders.** In addition to providing technical assistance during the World Trade Center (WTC) disaster, NIOSH designed medical monitoring and treatment programs for WTC disaster emergency responders and the surrounding community. NIOSH oversees centers of excellence for assessing and treating the current physical and mental health conditions appearing in the WTC responder and community populations. Through periodic surveillance, the NIOSH WTC Health Program also has the ability to detect the appearance of longer term effects in a population at high risk for developing multiple health conditions in the future.

**Building Capacity for the Future.** NIOSH funds programs to support occupational safety and health research and education through 18 regional university-based Education and Research Centers; 10 Centers for Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education, and Prevention; and 31 Training Project grants that train occupational health professionals and researchers to help meet the increasing demand for occupational physicians, occupational nurses, industrial hygienists and safety professionals.

## Burden of Injury and Illness to Workers, Their Families and the Nation.

- ▶ Approximately 9,000 workers are injured at work each day.
- ▶ Every day, 16 workers die from a fatal workplace injury and 134 workers die from work-related illness.
- ▶ In 2007, there were over 5,400 work-related fatal injuries and over 4 million non-fatal work-related injuries and illnesses in the U.S.
- ▶ U.S. direct and indirect costs to businesses from workers' compensation and lost productivity, and to society from workers' compensation care shifted to the general healthcare system through private health insurance, Medicaid and Medicare, range from \$128 to \$155 billion per year.