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NIOSH is widely recognized for its leadership in research, recommendations, and technical assistance to prevent work-related injury and illness in the U.S., but you may be less familiar with our efforts with many partners to advance occupational safety and health internationally. There are more than 2.7 billion workers worldwide, including an estimated 170 million working children ages 5-17. Developing nations look to the U.S. for help in building their health and safety infrastructures, and designing interventions that meet their unique needs. About 2 million fatalities each year are attributed to work-related diseases and injuries. Clearly, the global need for assistance is great, and NIOSH has responded on several fronts.

- NIOSH contributes funding to the National Institutes of Health's Fogarty International Training and Research Program in Environmental and Occupational Health to enable U.S. universities to support international research and training in developing nations. In 2001, 26 nations were supported by the program.
- Under a cooperative agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO), NIOSH has helped support global activities of the WHO Office of Occupational Health including infrastructure support and development and protection and promotion of worker health.
- NIOSH has worked to develop a number of international documents including the WHO/ILO/UNEP/EU International Program on Chemical Safety (IPCS), the Concise International Chemical Assessment Documents, and the IPCS Environmental Health Criteria Documents. Additionally, the International Chemical Safety Cards provide plain language summaries for over 1,200 chemicals and are available in 14 languages. To access the International Chemical Safety Cards, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/ipcs/icstart.html>.
- NIOSH international research includes assisting with the development of an internet-based occupational safety and health training course for college students in Trinidad and Tobago; developing tools to assess worker exposure to particulate matter in Australia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom; and studying occupational exposures to determine links to breast cancer in the Czech Republic.
- NIOSH evaluated the efficiency of tuberculosis engineering controls in Russia and Brazil; provided exposure and respirator-fit assistance to the WHO; worked with Venezuela to control mercury in small gold mines; and validated real-time lead measurements in Peru.
- NIOSH has participated both as a member and leader on several international organization projects. Rich Metzler, Director of the NIOSH National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory is the Head of the International Standards Organization Technical Committee on Personal Protective Equipment. I serve as the Chair of the WHO Global Occupational Health Programme Collaborating Centers Network and Marilyn Fingerhut serves as the Coordinator. NIOSH is also active in both the International Committee for Coal Research and the International Commission on Occupational Health.

As the New Year approaches, I look forward to further accomplishments by NIOSH and its partners as we continue these important collaborations to advance safe and healthful workplaces around the world.

## The State of CDC

On November 14, 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its first annual "State of CDC" report which highlighted CDC's priorities, achievements, and challenges during the Fiscal Year 2003. Included in the report are accomplishments by NIOSH that have significantly contributed to the mission of CDC. Among these are research in NIOSH's virtual reality safety research laboratory to advance the design of life-saving safety harnesses for the 21st Century workforce; collaborations between NIOSH and diverse partners to significantly reduce work-related back injuries among employees working at a national nursing home system; contributions to national emergency preparedness funding for medical screening for workers and volunteers in the World Trade Center rescue and recovery operations; and recognition as a national leader in research to prevent injuries and illnesses in mining, work-related lead poisonings, and job-related fatalities in Alaska. To view the full "State of CDC" report visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/state-of-cdc.html>.



## American Academy of Audiology Announces New Position Statement

NIOSH researchers led a team of hearing conservation specialists that drafted a new position statement for the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) on preventing noise-induced occupational hearing loss. The new position statement is available online at <http://www.audiology.org/professional/positions/niohlprevention.pdf>. It is expected to be used by more than 8,000 audiologists as guidance in developing occupational hearing loss prevention programs. Most of the principles in the position statement reflect NIOSH's criteria for a recommended standard for occupational noise exposure <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/98-126.html>.

## Steps to a HealthierUS Workforce

In 2003, the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson launched a new initiative, *Steps to a HealthierUS* aimed at promoting behaviors, actions, and programs that will help Americans live longer, healthier, and more satisfying lives. Under this initiative, NIOSH is introducing *Steps to a HealthierUS Workforce* to encourage workplace health programs that focus on both personal and workplace risk factors. On December 19, 2003, NIOSH will convene partners from government, industry, labor, academia and professional groups with experience in workplace health promotion and protection. The focus of this meeting will be to develop a framework for the initiative, and plan a national Symposium for 2004. Highlights of the planning meeting and information on upcoming events will be featured in future issues of eNews.

## Update on National Occupational Injury Research Symposium

The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Occupational Injury Research Symposium was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in October. Over 300 researchers from academia, labor, and industry and NIOSH researchers gathered to share the latest information on work-related injuries. Sessions included research on injuries in mining, health care, transportation, construction, agriculture and firefighting. Special sessions focused on workplace violence, injuries to young workers and Hispanics, and emergency response. Comments from participants included: "It is clearly the conference for the occupational injury research community to attend," and that the conference provided "much reporting of results of NIOSH extramurally-funded research." The next NOIRS is scheduled for 2006. For more information on NOIRS or to view the full conference agenda and abstracts, visit <http://www2a.cdc.gov/noirs/noirsmain2003.html>.



## BSC Award to Dr. James Merchant

At the September 11, 2003 Board of Scientific Counselors meeting, NIOSH honored Dr. James Merchant for his outstanding service and leadership to the BSC, including his leadership as the Board's Chair. Dr. Merchant is Professor and Dean of the College of Public Health, University of Iowa, and is the 2003 recipient of the James P. Keogh Award for exceptional service to the field of occupational safety and health. Dr. Merchant is a past director of the Division of Respiratory Disease Studies. Many thanks to Dr. Merchant for his service to NIOSH and the field of occupational safety and health.



## NIOSH Issues Report Assessing Potential for Residual Contamination at Nuclear Weapons Facilities

A November 7, 2003 NIOSH report to Congress assesses the potential for residual contamination from radioactivity and beryllium at U.S. facilities that performed and supported the development of nuclear weapons during the Cold War era. The study finds that some sites have little potential for significant residual contamination, some have the potential for significant residual contamination, and some have insufficient documentation for making a determination. Nothing in the findings suggests that a current, unrecognized occupational or public health hazard exists at any of the facilities. The report was based on a NIOSH examination of more than 60,000 pages of documents from the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Worker Advocacy and other sources. The report is available for downloading from the NIOSH webpage <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/ocas/pdfs/tbd/fnlrcr.pdf>.

## Researchers at NIOSH Pittsburgh Research Laboratory Win Prestigious Society for Mining and Exploration (SME) Award for Mine Safety Contributions

Four PRL researchers were recognized by the SME for outstanding achievements in research for preventing work-related deaths and injuries in mining. Christopher Mark received the SME Rock Mechanics Award for his research and recommendations for keeping coal mine roofs stable during pillar recovery. Susan Robertson won the J. W. Woomer Award for the creation of a computer program that can be used by mine planners for designing ventilation systems to reduce air contaminants in mines to safe levels. The Stefanko Award was presented to Christopher Mark, Frank Chase, and Deno Pappas for their technical paper on reducing the risk of roof falls in pillar recovery.

## NIOSH Assists in South Carolina Ricin Investigation

On October 15, 2003, an envelope containing a threatening note and a sealed container was processed at a mail processing and distribution facility in Greenville, South Carolina. The envelope was isolated from other workers and the contents sent for laboratory testing at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) where it was confirmed that ricin was present. A team of CDC investigators, including NIOSH personnel were sent to Greenville to conduct thorough epidemiologic and environmental investigations. All 36 workers at the postal facility were interviewed to identify ricin-related illnesses; however, no workers had illness suggestive of ricin exposure. The environmental assessment and sampling consisted of 70 wipe samples and five surface dust samples. All environmental samples were analyzed at CDC and were negative for ricin. The results of the investigation were reported in the November 21, 2003, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5246a5.htm>. 

## NIOSH Website Wins "Best of the Web" Award



The NIOSH website was recently named the "2003 Best of the Web" by Business Insurance magazine. Receiving the award under the "Safety and Loss Control Services" category, the NIOSH website is "quick," "functional," "reliable," and contains "valuable technical information." <http://www.businessinsurance.com/cgi-bin/page.pl?pageId=138>.

## Around NIOSH

### NIOSH Diversity Project

The 2nd Annual Diversity Solutions Conference was held on October 27, 2003 in Atlanta Georgia. NIOSH along with the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and the Epidemiology Program Office were co-sponsors of the conference.

### Division of Applied Research Technology (DART)

A new DART reproductive health study will evaluate bicycling policemen using "no-nose" bicycle seats (saddles) over a six month period. This proposed study is a follow-up to previous DART research which found that bicycling police officers had significantly shorter nocturnal erections, a measure of erectile function. In that study, the effect was associated with pressure caused by the projecting noses of the saddles that the policemen used. For more information on this research, contact Steven Schrader at [sms4@cdc.gov](mailto:sms4@cdc.gov) or visit the NIOSH topic page <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bikerepro/bikepagetop.html>.

### Division of Respiratory Disease Studies (DRDS)

NIOSH Researchers have developed the first in a series of communications between NIOSH and the employees of Brush Wellman, Inc. highlighting information on completed NIOSH research studies, current research activities and future planned activities. Since 1998, NIOSH and Brush Wellman, Inc., the largest U.S. producer of beryllium and beryllium products, have collaborated on research focused on beryllium and its associated health effects. The current newsletter describes NIOSH activities related to beryllium skin sensitization and the genetics research that NIOSH is conducting. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/beryllium/newsletter.html>.

### Division of Safety Research (DSR)

Highway crashes are the leading contributor to occupational injury deaths in the United States, accounting for 25% of work-related injury deaths in 2002. NIOSH announces a new resource to help prevent these deaths and injuries, Work-related Roadway Crashes: Challenges and Opportunities for Prevention. This publication provides in-depth data, analysis, and concrete steps that employers and others can take to prevent this leading cause of job-related fatalities. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2003-119>.

### Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations and Field Studies (DSHEFS)

The Dose-Response Specialty Group of the Society for Risk Analysis has selected James Yiin as this year's winner of the student merit award for graduate research in dose-response assessment. This work was done in conjunction with the Risk Evaluation Branch, EID, while James was a student at the University of Cincinnati. The award recognizes him for conducting "a novel and sophisticated quantitative exposure-response analysis of diesel exhaust and lung cancer among workers in the trucking industry."

### Education and Information Division (EID)

The Risk Evaluation Branch of the EID was pleased to host a visiting scientist, Yeon-Soon Ahn from the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) in South Korea for the past ten months. Dr. Ahn brought with her data from 45,000 Korean iron and steel workers and worked with NIOSH researchers to describe the mortality experience of the workers. Collaboration will continue when Dr. Ahn returns to Korea, including analyzing cancer incidence and longitudinal data on hearing threshold levels and exposures to noise and carbon monoxide. This collaboration provides opportunities to enlarge the international occupational safety and health community and to test new quantitative methods in risk assessment.

### **Health Effects Laboratory Division (HELD)**

The genetic susceptibility team in HELD has been examining the genomic changes in malignant melanoma to classify the stage specific changes in diseases at the molecular level, identify molecular targets for treatment, and identify people at risk for melanomas. Through their research, the team, in collaboration with scientists at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), has identified a unique chromosomal alteration association with the development of malignant melanoma. This identification has led to development of a Letter of Intent for a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) with a biotechnology firm, Spectral Genomics, Inc., to examine its utility as a genetic screening approach for staging melanomas. Melanomas are of concern to workers in outdoor industries such as agricultural and construction.

### **National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL)**

Staff from NPPTL have been invited to serve on the inaugural roster of the newly formed American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Committee on Homeland Security Applications. The goals of this new committee are to develop standards and guidance materials for homeland security applications and to coordinate existing ASTM standardization related to homeland security needs. The first meeting of the committee will be held in January 2004.

### **Pittsburgh Research Laboratory (PRL)**

Under a National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) PRL researchers have been investigating the use of lasers in atmospheres containing flammable dusts and gases, including Powder River Basin coal dust, Pittsburgh coal dust, and methane. Recent tests using an iron-oxide target on a single-mode optical fiber have determined that the minimum time-to-ignition varies inversely as the square of the igniting power. This finding is important in defining the operating characteristics of a system designed to protect against ignitions in methane-laden atmospheres. Recommendations resulting from this project are expected to help in the development of good safety practices.

### **Spokane Research Laboratory (SRL)**

Researchers from SRL in cooperation with mine operators conducted a study of heat stress exposures among mine rescue workers in underground mines. Ambient environmental conditions and heat strain indicators were measured using conventional ventilation monitoring tools during mine rescue training exercises. Heat strain was measured with an ingestible temperature-sensing pill and a heart rate monitoring chest strap was used to indicate physical strain resulting from physical activity and heat. The effectiveness of the study was investigated as to possible heat strain preventive action.

## **Web Sightings**

### **Updated Topic Page**

NIOSH has recently updated the Pesticide Illness and Injury Surveillance Topic Page to include links to NIOSHTIC-2 searches and pesticide reports and presentations from the Sentinel Event Notification System for Occupational Risk (SENSOR) program. The topic page also includes information on state-based pesticide poisoning surveillance programs and links to Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports and peer-reviewed journal articles. The topic page is <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/pesticides>.



## Publications

### **New CD-ROM Safety Checklist Program for Schools**

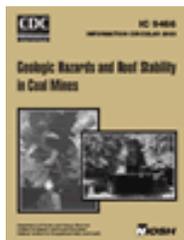
A new safety CD-Rom entitled *NIOSH Safety Checklists Program for Schools and Other Safety Databases* is available. The safety checklists program guides users with limited occupational safety and health background in setting up and running a safety and environmental program at their vocational and technical schools. Order at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/email-pubs.html> or by calling 1-800-35-NIOSH.

### **Preventing Injuries When Working with Hydraulic Excavators and Backhoe Loaders**

A new NIOSH Workplace Solutions document, *Preventing Injuries When Working with Hydraulic Excavators and Backhoe Loaders* (DHHS Pub 2004-107), provides recommendations to equipment operators and site workers for preventing potentially fatal injuries that can occur if workers are struck by backhoes or components of the machines. Also included are case studies of fatalities. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/wp-solutions/2004-107>.

### **Focus on Prevention: Conducting a Mining Hazard Risk Assessment**

Focus on Prevention: *Conducting a Hazard Risk Assessment* is a new NIOSH training packet developed to assist instructors as they determine how to use risk assessment to improve mining safety preparedness and to present risk assessment concepts and tools to trainees. The document can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/pubs/2003-139.html>.



### **Geologic Hazards and Roof Stability in Coal Mines**

A new NIOSH report, *Geologic Hazards and Roof Stability in Coal Mines*, describes geologic origin, association, and potential danger from the most common hazards in coal mines, such as weak rock and roof defects. Also included is the NIOSH method for hazard recognition and prevention, roof fall analysis. The document is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/pubs/2003-152.html>.

## Upcoming Events

### **“Call for Papers” for 2<sup>nd</sup> International Control Banding Workshop**

NIOSH along with the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), and the American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) will host the Control Banding Workshop in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 1-2, 2004. The Technical Program Committee has issued a call for abstracts for papers and posters <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/banding-call-march04.html>. The deadline for submission has been extended until December 15, 2003.

### **NIOSH B Reader Certification Program: Looking to the Future Open Meeting**

An open meeting for the NIOSH B Reader Certification Program will be held on March 4, 2004 in McLean Virginia. For more information or to register for the meeting, visit <http://www2a.cdc.gov/drds/cwhsp/regform.html>.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Applied Ergonomics Conference**

NIOSH and the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Musculoskeletal Disorders and Intervention Effectiveness teams are among the co-sponsors of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Applied Ergonomics Conference to be held on March 8-11 in Orlando, Florida. The conference, produced by the Institute of Industrial Engineers, will offer sessions around six educational tracks: manufacturing applications, services and support industries, office applications, engineering and design, ergonomics programs and potpourri. For more information on the conference, visit <http://appliedergonetnetwork.iienet.org/pages/index.cfm?pageid=133>.

### **2004 National Institute for Farm Safety (NIFS) “Call for Papers”**

The NIFS has issued a “Call for Papers” for the 2004 Summer Conference to be held in Keystone Colorado, in conjunction with the 2004 National Symposium in Agricultural Health. The deadline for submission of abstracts is December 15, 2003. More information at <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~agsafety/NIFS/meetings2004.htm>.