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From the Director's Desk

A new NIOSH initiative, *Steps to a HealthierUS Workforce*, is an effort to engage all who share the common goals of protecting and improving the health of people who work. It seeks to stimulate innovative approaches to integrate health protection at work with reduction of risk from non-work health threats.



The protection, preservation, and improvement of the health of people who work are goals shared by workers, their families, and their employers. Whether or not an illness or injury is caused by work, the consequences are often the same: suffering, loss of income, increased health care expenditures, reduced quality of life, and limited opportunities, both for the directly affected individuals and for those dependent on them.

Despite the common consequences of health problems resulting from hazards and risks on and off the job, there has been a longstanding separation between efforts to control health risks and hazards from work and those focused on individual and community health risk reduction outside the workplace. The *Steps to a HealthierUS Workforce* initiative attempts to bridge that gulf—to enlist the knowledge, commitment and experience of members of both the occupational health protection community and the health promotion community toward a common goal. Frequently common debilitating diseases such as COPD, heart disease, depression and lung cancer can be caused or made worse by multiple risk factors on and off the job, singly or in combination. An integrated, comprehensive approach to identifying and reducing the contributors to disease, disability, and death in people who work may prove more effective than the current fragmented strategies.

To explore the value and potential limitations of the initiative, NIOSH hosted a planning meeting in December 2003. Participants from labor, industry, professional associations, government agencies, and academia engaged in a day of lively dialogue. Breakout groups considered the potential benefits and limitations of the initiative, identified the broad and diverse group of stakeholders with an interest in this area, and developed a framework for a major national symposium to launch the initiative. This Symposium is scheduled for October 26-28, 2004, in Washington, DC. For up-to-date information on the Steps initiative planning meeting and the upcoming symposium, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pgms/steps/>.

This new initiative stems from the larger U.S. Department of Health and Human Services initiative, *Steps to a HealthierUS*, which aims to promote behaviors, actions, and programs to help Americans live longer, healthier, and more satisfying lives.

March 24th is World TB Day

In observance of World TB (tuberculosis) Day, March 24, eNews highlights the NIOSH related activities for reducing risks of work-related TB infections. NIOSH conducts a multi-disciplinary program predicated upon the unique capabilities that NIOSH can contribute to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) overall efforts in TB elimination. The following are a few examples of NIOSH activities.

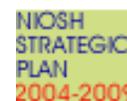
- NIOSH has been performing research to reduce employees' potential exposures to airborne TB bacteria in health care settings by evaluating the efficacy of various types of engineering controls, including ventilation, filtration, portable room air cleaners, and isolation room design. NIOSH is also conducting computational fluid dynamic modeling to further evaluate the important parameters that influence the performance of engineering controls. Upcoming journal articles will address this work.
- NIOSH provided funding to the University of Colorado, Boulder to investigate the effectiveness of ultraviolet light as a key component of controls used to reduce healthcare employees' exposure to TB. In a special laboratory chamber that recreated a hospital room, researchers studied multiple factors relating to the efficacy of ultraviolet germicidal irradiation systems. The results have been published in the scientific literature and will be incorporated in future guidelines and recommendations from NIOSH and CDC. A report from the study, "Efficacy of ultraviolet irradiation in controlling the spread of tuberculosis," is linked from the

tuberculosis topic page on the NIOSH web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tb>.

- Since 1990, NIOSH has conducted more than 100 Health Hazard Evaluations (HHEs) responding to concerns about potential TB transmissions or infections in a variety of workplaces, including hospitals, neighborhood health centers, TB clinics, homeless shelters, drug treatment centers, correctional facilities, social service facilities, laboratories, medical waste treatment facilities, and animal facilities. The scope of these evaluations has varied based on the situation and has included assessment of environmental controls (general ventilation, local exhaust ventilation, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation) and personal protective equipment, and program reviews and epidemiologic assessments of tuberculin skin test screening and outbreak data. Each HHE resulted in recommendations to help employers and employees address potential health and safety risks related to TB infection. Abstracts from the HHEs conducted between 1990 and 1999 are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/2001-116.html>. A complete reference of TB-related HHEs is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe>.
- NIOSH's research on respirators and its technical guidance on respirator use have helped employers and employees identify effective, practical personal protective equipment to reduce risks of work-related TB infection. The NIOSH Respirator Topic Page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/respirators>, provides information on respirator selection and maintenance and links to a searchable database of all certified respirators.
- The NIOSH tuberculosis topic page provides safety professionals, employers, and employees a wide variety of information related to TB protection. Among these resources are links to NIOSH publications targeting health care workers, correctional facilities workers, and migrant farm workers. The topic page is <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tb>.
- A NIOSH DVD uses the latest communications technology to provide health care workers, administrators, and infection control specialists with recommendations for respiratory protection and respirator use. The DVD includes the videos *Respirators: Your TB Defense* and *TB Respiratory Protection: Administrator's Review* and is accessible at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/video/tb.html>.

New NIOSH Strategic Plan Launched

To better meet the needs of the changing American Workforce, NIOSH is currently developing its Fiscal Year 2004 – 2009 Strategic Plan. This new plan will serve as a strategic framework for the Institute over the next six years by establishing relevant, cross-cutting Institute-wide goals and measures that support NIOSH's vision and mission. As the government's primary scientific organization that focuses on occupational safety and health, NIOSH succeeds in reaching its goal of reducing workplace injury, illness, and death only through the efforts of its partners. Throughout this strategic planning process, NIOSH encourages its stakeholders to actively participate in influencing the future strategic directions of the Institute by providing commentary and feedback on the current draft strategic plan. The current FY 2004 – 2009 draft strategic plan outline can be viewed at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/strategic/>. NIOSH welcomes your comments and your continued support of the Institute. Comments can be sent to nioshstratplan@cdc.gov.



Forbes Magazine Spotlights NIOSH Welding Fume Research

NIOSH's research on potential effects of occupational exposures to welding fumes is referenced in an article in the February 2, 2004 issues of Forbes magazine. The article, "Torch Song" (pp. 44-46) notes that NIOSH is investigating the question of whether the components of welding fumes pose job-related risks for nervous system impairment and other disorders, and if so, in what circumstances the potential risks might occur. The article focuses on lawsuits by employees who allege that they developed Parkinson's-like impairments from exposures to fumes. Further information on NIOSH's research is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/welldata.html>.

NIOSH Addresses Potential Effects from Work Use of Snowmobiles in National Parks

Have you ever wondered how a NIOSH health hazard evaluation (HHE) is generated, conducted, and concluded? In a recently published journal article, NIOSH researchers offer a concise but rich description of a 1999 HHE that addressed a challenging and non-traditional workplace health issue. In the investigation, NIOSH responded to concerns about back pain, hand strain, and other reported musculoskeletal disorders among National Park Service employees who rode snowmobiles during winter months for up to 10 hours per day while patrolling and maintaining parkland. From rigorous analysis, NIOSH made recommendations for assessing and addressing potential risks from jolting and other stresses linked with the employees' occupational use of snowmobiles (Habes et al, "Case Studies: An Ergonomic Evaluation of Snowmobiles," *Applied Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, Volume 18(4): 213-225, 2003). The HHE report on which the journal article is based is available on the NIOSH web site <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/1999-0283-2855.pdf>.

NIOSH Cited in USA Today

NIOSH's research and technical assistance with industry and labor in evaluating concerns about workplace cancer clusters was featured in a February 2, 2004, article in *USA Today*. The article discussed the complexities of investigating such cases and determining whether they are caused by workplace factors. Interviewed in the article, Allison Tepper, chief of the NIOSH Hazard Evaluations and Technical Assistance Branch, noted that "In occupational settings, by and large, reports about perceived cancer cluster cases do not end up identifying a definitive cause." For more information on NIOSH research regarding cancer cluster reports, contact Allison Tepper at alt0@cdc.gov.

Around NIOSH

Office of the Director

NIOSH is pleased to announce several new senior personnel actions. Michael Galvin has been selected as the Director of NIOSH's Office of Extramural Programs (OEP). Max Kiefer has assumed the position of Interim Assistant Director of Emergency Preparedness and Response for NIOSH. Lisa Delaney will manage the Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations, and Field Studies (DSHEFS) Atlanta Field Office on an interim basis.

NIOSH Agricultural Centers

The NIOSH Great Lakes Center for Agricultural Safety and Health based at The Ohio State University will host the "Improving Agricultural Health and Safety Programs Through Evaluation: Rigorous and Practical Strategies" conference on March 15-16, 2004 in Columbus, Ohio. More information on the conference, including the agenda and registration information, can be accessed at http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~agsafety/glc/GLC_Conference.htm.

The NIOSH High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety based at Colorado State University will host the 2004 National Symposium on Agricultural Health and Safety on June 20-24, 2004 at the Keystone Resort in Colorado. More information on the symposium can be accessed at <http://www.hicahs.colostate.edu>.

More information on the NIOSH Agricultural Centers can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/agctrhom.html>.

NIOSH Diversity Project

To compliment the Institute's emphasis on diversity, NIOSH is launching a new web site. The site, Diversity in NIOSH, provides information on the Institute's diversity related activities. The web site is <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pgms/diversity>.



Division of Applied Research and Technology (DART)

DART researcher John Franks was named the 11th recipient of the Outstanding Hearing Conservationist Award from the National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA). John was honored for his world-wide leadership in the field of hearing conservation which has influenced the advancement of hearing loss prevention technology. The award was presented at the NHCA annual conference in Seattle, WA, February 19-21, 2004.

Division of Respiratory Disease Studies (DRDS)

Don Campbell and Chris Coffey, along with several other NIOSH staff, assisted with the preparation and delivery of NIOSH testimony at an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rulemaking public hearing on January 28, 2004, in Washington DC. Public testimony was presented on an OSHA proposed rule to establish Assigned Protection Factors (APFs) for respirator use. APFs are a measure of the protection provided by each class of respirators and are an essential part of the respirator selection process. The NIOSH testimony was supportive of the OSHA process for setting APFs and of the APF values proposed by OSHA. NIOSH has committed to modifying its respirator certification requirements to assure that all NIOSH certified respirators perform at a level consistent with the OSHA APF values.

Division of Safety Research (DSR)

Results from a collaborative survey of minority farm operators by NIOSH and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are available in two new NIOSH informational brochures. The brochures summarize key findings from the collaborative survey regarding the risk of childhood occupational injuries and asthma among minority farm operations, and suggest steps that can be taken to reduce the risks. The publications are *Injuries to Youth on Minority Farm Operations*, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-117> and *Asthma Among Household Youth on Minority Farm Operations*, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-118>. The survey fills a gap that existed because NIOSH had insufficient data to assess whether patterns of injury and illness on minority farm operations were different from those of other farm operations. This was due to the statistically small number of minority farm operations in the U.S. A second survey will identify childhood injury patterns and for the first time will collect adult occupational farm injury data. The surveys are part of a broader NIOSH effort with diverse partners in agriculture to support the NIOSH Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention Initiative. The collection of adult occupational farm injury data in the second survey also will support the ongoing NIOSH Agricultural Initiative. More information about NIOSH efforts to prevent injury and illness in agriculture is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/agriculture>.

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

DSHEFS is providing consultation to the New York State Health Department and the community of Endicott NY, regarding health concerns among former workers at an IBM facility. DSHEFS scientists met with company representatives on January 14, 2004, to discuss the history of the former IBM facility in Endicott and the available records. NIOSH staff will review the available records and determine if a health study is feasible. Lynne Pinkerton (NIOSH) and Greg Ulirsch (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry) also attended several community meetings in Endicott to discuss concerns related to the former IBM facility. For more information on this project, please contact Lynne Pinkerton at lep5@cdc.gov.

Education and Information Division (EID)

You can now order print and CD-Rom copies of the *NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards* at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/npg.html> or by calling NIOSH at 1-800-35-NIOSH. The *Pocket Guide* is a vital source of general chemical hazard and control information for workers, employers, and occupational health professionals. It also has become a standard issue reference for use by emergency preparedness personnel and fire fighters and is a standard text used in the Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), right-to-know, and emergency planning training courses. The *Pocket Guide* presents important occupational safety and health

information and data in abbreviated form for 677 chemicals and other hazardous agents that are found in the work environment.

Health Effects Laboratory Division (HELD)

The West Virginia Chapter of the American Lung Association is honoring HELD scientist Val Vallyathan, for his outstanding contributions to the field of lung health. Val will receive the first Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Research in Lung Health from the West Virginia Chapter.

National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL)

Ziqing Zhuang, a General Engineer at NPPTL, was elected by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), Respiratory Protection Committee to serve as the 2004 vice-chair of the committee. The committee provides a forum for exchanging ideas and information on control of exposure to toxic and irritating substances and oxygen-deficient atmospheres using respiratory protection. The committee consists of 30 members representing respirator manufacturers, respirator users, industrial hygiene and safety professionals, academia, and independent consultants.

Pittsburgh Research Laboratory (PRL)

Researchers at the Pittsburgh Research Laboratory began a comprehensive sound power level study of a Fletcher roof bolting machine guided by International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 3743-2, an acoustical standard detailing methods for the determination of sound power levels using sound pressure in reverberant fields. In collaboration with West Virginia University and J. H. Fletcher & Co., a feedback system for optimizing drilling performance was designed and installed on the bolter. This will allow NIOSH researchers to evaluate sound emissions under a wide array of operating conditions and to assess ideal performance and noise control scenarios. For more information on this project contact R.J. Matetic at rmatetic@cdc.gov.



Spokane Research Laboratory (SRL)

The Spokane Research Laboratory has developed a computer program, the HazCom Helper, that mine personnel can use to comply with the Mine Safety and Health Administration's Rule 30, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 47. This rule requires mines to develop and implement a program for evaluating hazardous materials on their sites and communicating this information to employees. The HazCom Helper is available both as a CD and on the NIOSH Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/HAZCOM>. This program has been well received by the occupational safety and health community. In 2003, the program was the second most downloaded program on the NIOSH Web site. In addition, six hands-on workshops and seminars were presented to alert mine safety professionals and mine operators about potential hazards. For more information, contact Doug Scott at dscott@cdc.gov.

News from our Partners

NIOSH partnered with two agencies in the Department of Labor, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Wage and Hour Division, to provide key partners with information on forklift safety and young workers. This joint outreach was sparked by shared concerns about continuing deaths of youths while operating forklifts, highlighted by two young worker deaths in the previous summer and a January 2004 death. A joint mailing, including a cover letter signed by each agency head, a safety and health bulletin developed by OSHA, stickers developed by the Wage and Hour Division that can be affixed to forklifts noting that the federal law prohibits operators less than 18 years of age, and NIOSH materials, including fatality investigation reports and recommendations for preventing forklift related injuries. Approximately 5,000 informational packets were distributed with assistance from groups such as the National Safety Council, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America and the Center to Protect Workers Rights. More information on this partnership is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-02-12-04.html>. Information on young workers safety and health is available on the NIOSH Topic Page <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth/>.

Web Sightings

Keeping Youth Safe on Construction Sites

The construction industry, which employs less than 3% of all young workers, ranks 3rd in the number of work-related fatalities to youth – at 14% of all occupational deaths to youth under age 18. A new NIOSH brochure provides recommendations to employers for maintaining a safe work environment for youth on construction sites. The brochure also highlights important laws and regulations and lists prohibited jobs for youth and is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-113>.



Upcoming Events

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. To register for the meeting, visit <http://www2a.cdc.gov/drds/cwhsp/regform.html>. For more information about this meeting, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pamphlet.html>.

7th 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 "7th Annual Applied Ergonomics Conference" to be held on March 8-11, 2004 in Orlando, Florida. The conference, sponsored 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://appliedergonetwork.iienet.org/pages/index.cfm?pageid=133>.

Symposium on Silica: Sampling and Analysis

The "Symposium on Silica: Sampling and Analysis," sponsored by ASTM, will be held April 22-23, 2004 in Salt Lake City, Utah. NIOSH, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration, along with the American Industrial Hygiene Association's Laboratory Quality Programs technical committees, and the National Institute for Standards and Technology will present their accomplishments in improving the quality of sampling and analytical procedures for determining occupational exposure to airborne silica-containing dusts. The Chairperson for the symposium is NIOSH Exposure Assessment Branch Chief Martin Harper. The final program and call for registrations can be accessed at http://www.astm.org/SYMPOSIA/D22_Symp.htm.

The Way We Work and Its Impact on Our Health

NIOSH is co-sponsoring a Public Policy Forum and Conference in Los Angeles, California, April 22-23, 2004 titled "The Way We Work and Its Impact on Our Health." The forum will bring together employers, workers, labor organizations, health care providers, policy makers and academia to identify solutions for reducing harmful health outcomes due to work-related stress. Information on the forum can be found at <http://www.workhealth.org/2004%20California%20Forum/first%20announcement.html>.

Toxicology and Risk Assessment Conference

The 2004 Toxicology and Risk Assessment, co-sponsored by NIOSH, offers scientific workshops and sessions, and an evening poster session. An addition to this year's conference is a student poster competition. It will be held April 26-30, 2004 at the Marriott North, in West Chester (north of Cincinnati), Ohio. Additional registration, contact, scientific program and logistic information is available at the following link <http://intranet.meti.mantech.com/2004TOXconference>.

Long Working Hours, Safety, and Health: Toward a National Research Agenda

NIOSH, the University of Maryland School of Nursing, and the U.S. Department of Justice are co-sponsoring a national conference, "Long Working Hours, Safety, and Health: Toward a National Research Agenda," to be held April 29-30, 2004 in Baltimore, Maryland. This innovative conference will explore the sociological, economic, and health dimensions of long work hours. For more information on the conference, visit <http://nursing.umaryland.edu/longworkhours/index.htm>.

2nd International Symposium on Work Ability

The 2nd International Symposium on Work Ability is scheduled for October 18-20, 2004 in Verona, Italy. The Symposium is being organized by the Universities of Milano and Verona, the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) Scientific Committee "Ageing and Work" and the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) Technical Committee "Ageing." Topics include ways to assess and promote work ability and a discussion on the factors affecting the work ability of older workers. NIOSH is an institutional member of ICOH. For more information on the symposium, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pdfs/workability-a.pdf>.

Word of the Month

Sound power is a basic measurement of the acoustic output of a device as measured in watts and is constant regardless of its location in different environments

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