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From the Director's Desk

Last month, I reviewed some of the highlights of NIOSH activity in 2007. Things promise to be equally busy in 2008, as many of the initiatives that we started over the past five years begin to reach maturity, and as we identify steps that need to be taken now to prepare our professional communities for the challenges that we are all sure to face over the next 10 to 20 years.

In particular, two large-scale initiatives promise to drive much of NIOSH's work in 2008:

- We will continue to work closely with our partners to align our research with the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA). The eight NORA Sector Councils, which are now fully formed, represent an amazing array of talent. The NORA Symposium 2008, scheduled for July 29, 2008, in Denver, will showcase the excellent research that has begun to emerge from the second decade of NORA.
- The Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006, popularly known as the MINER Act, set ambitious goals for research needed to improve disaster preparedness and response in the mining industry. I am proud that our mining research laboratories stepped up vigorously to carry out Congress' mandates. Look for further progress in the coming months in critical research with our mining partners on communication and tracking systems, refuge chambers, air supply, and other needs specified in the Act. As required by the Act, we have realigned our mining research program under the new NIOSH Office of Mine Safety and Health, which was announced on November 28. This realignment will help us better coordinate and streamline our activities.

I look forward to other actions that will position NIOSH and our partners to protect the safety and health of today's generation of workers, and those to follow, in the changing landscape of the 21st Century. We will remain vigilant for ways to incorporate the latest scientific advancements into our research, and where possible, to drive advancements. We will continue to monitor trends in the nature of work and the demographics of the U.S. workforce, and to align our research planning with high-priority needs arising from those trends. The coming year will offer many opportunities to address those goals.

For example, the ability to identify and control work-related hazards will depend on increasingly precise, increasingly timely sampling and analysis. Last month, NIOSH convened a national meeting to consider needs for keeping NIOSH's seminal "Occupational Exposure Sampling Strategies Manual" relevant to the 21st Century workplace. The results of that meeting, combined with ongoing stakeholder input over the coming year, will help shape the future of occupational exposure assessment. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/expa/oessmeeting/> Also in 2008, we will hold a historic symposium on new technologies for direct-reading, real-time exposure assessment – please watch future issues of NIOSH eNews for date and location.

As the nature of work changes, the role of work organization as a critical factor in occupational safety and health looms increasingly larger. On March 6-8, 2008, the Seventh International Conference on Work, Safety, and Health will showcase the latest research in this area. <http://www.apa.org/pi/work/wsh.html>

Changes in technology and new industrial trends will bring the potential for exposures to new chemicals and agents, to new and more complex combinations of agents, and even to materials that do not yet exist in traditional industrial processes. What will those changes mean for the traditional approach of setting quantitative limits for occupational exposures to specific materials? NIOSH has begun to address those complex issues in looking at the revolutionary field of nanotechnology, among other emerging aspects of work in 2008 and beyond. I look forward to engaging our partners in discussions on these challenges in the next year.

Now, as 2007 draws to an end, I want to express my appreciation for the hard work that our employees and their external partners have contributed over the past 12 months. Please continue to read NIOSH eNews to stay current with our research programs in the next 12 months.

The NIOSH Office of Mine Safety and Health

The establishment of the NIOSH Office of Mine Safety and Health was announced in a notice signed by Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt and published on November 28 in the Federal Register. This action, which carries out a mandate under the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006, realigns the NIOSH Pittsburgh Research Laboratory and the NIOSH Spokane Research Laboratory within the new Office. The Office will provide national and international leadership in the prevention of work-related illness, injury and fatalities of mine workers through research and prevention activities at the Pittsburgh and Spokane Laboratories. Additional information can be found in the November 28 Federal Register Notice, <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/07-5866.htm>.

NIOSH Board of Scientific Counselors to Meet

The NIOSH Board of Scientific Counselors (BSC) will meet on Thursday, December 13 at the Holiday Inn Capitol in Washington, DC. Agenda items for the meeting include the NIOSH response to the National Academies of Science Program reviews. The meeting is open to the public. For additional information, contact Roger Rosa, BSC Executive Secretary at RRosa@cdc.gov or view the November 13 Federal Register Notice, <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/E7-22155.htm>.

NIOSH Science Blog

On December 3, the NIOSH Science Blog added a new posting on workplace stress. Stress is a prevalent problem across occupations and the effects of stress can have broad impact on the worker's general health and well-being. We invite you to share your ideas with NIOSH scientists and each other. Add a posting to the blog by visiting our Web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/>. There you can also view our previous science topics, preventing fire fighter fatalities from cardiovascular events, and truck driver safety and health.

Register for NOIRS 2008

Registration is now open for the "National Occupational Injury Research Symposium (NOIRS) 2008," <http://www.eshow2000.com/niosh/registration.cfm>. Full registration is \$200 before March 31, 2008, and \$275 after that date or onsite. The Symposium will be held October 21 – 23, 2008, in Pittsburgh, PA, at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel. More information on the Symposium, including the call for abstracts, can be found on the Symposium Web site, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/noirs/2008/>.



Body Art

NIOSH has developed a new Safety and Health Topic page on body art. The Web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/bodyart/>, provides strategies to reduce body artists' potential risks of work-related exposures to bloodborne pathogens in applying tattoos or piercing. The topic page presents recommendations and resources under four headings: vaccinating and educating, preventing needlestick injuries, reducing cross-contamination, and a guide to additional information on body piercing and tattooing topics.



Public Comments Added to NIOSH Dockets

Web pages for two NIOSH Dockets have been updated. Docket Number 036 “Total Inward Leakage Test for Half-Mask Air-Purifying Particulate Respirators” includes presentations from the June 2007 public meeting and comments submitted to the docket, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docket/nioshdocket0036.html>. Docket Number 052 “CBRN Guidance Documents” includes an archive of submitted comments, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docket/nioshdocket0052.html>.

Now Available: Donning Process and Instructions for NIOSH Approved Disposable Particulate Respirators

The NIOSH National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL) has been updating the list of approved disposable particulate respirators to include the donning process and user instructions. This information is being provided as a courtesy to users and has been provided by the approval holders. If the instructions for a model you are using are not listed, we have not received it from the approval holder. We encourage all approval holders to submit the donning processes and user instructions for all filtering face piece respirators approved by NIOSH. The current list of approved respirators can be viewed at http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part.

Look for Us

The NIOSH Exhibit Booth will be at these upcoming conferences.

- Construction Safety Council – Booths 412 and 414
Rosemont, IL
February 12 – 14, 2008
- Society of Mining Engineers (SME) Annual Meeting and Exhibit – Booth 1535
Salt Lake City, UT
February 24 – 27, 2008
- Fire Department Instructors Conference – Booth 248
Indianapolis, IN
April 9 – 12, 2008

r2p Corner

Award of Excellence for Public Health Training

Congratulations to the team who developed the Safe Patient Handling and Movement Training Program for the Schools of Nursing. The team, which is comprised of researchers from NIOSH, the Veterans Health Administration and the American Nurses Association, received the Award of Excellence for Public Health Training from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Public Health Education and Promotion Network. The award is given each year to the training program that has demonstrated a commitment to excellence in public health education. The new evidence-based curriculum developed by the team focuses on the use of modern patient handling equipment, such as powered ceiling and floor lifts, powered and un-powered lateral transfer aids, and other high-tech transfer equipment which removes the high risk physical labor associated with patient transfer tasks. To learn more, visit the NIOSH Web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/safe-patient/introduction.html> or contact Tom Waters at TWaters@cdc.gov.



NORA Construction Sector Council Updates

The NORA Construction Sector Council will be posting draft goals for the “National Construction Agenda” the week of December 17. The Council members and corresponding members have been working on the agenda over the past year to develop a set of 10 strategic goals to guide the nation in construction research and research-to-practice efforts. The Council is looking for additional comments and perspectives from the construction safety and health community on these draft goals. The draft will be posted on the NORA Construction Sector Council page <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/councils/const/> under "Products".



The inaugural issue of the new “NORA Construction Sector E-Newsletter” will be sent out the same week. This new newsletter will cover news and activities of the Construction Sector Council and other new research and events of interest to our construction stakeholders. To receive a copy of the newsletter, send an e-mail to David Bang at DBang@cdc.gov.

Also, the 18th Annual Construction Safety Conference and Exposition, to be held February 12-14, 2008, in Rosemont, Illinois (next to O'Hare airport in Chicago), will include a daylong session on February 14 to present and discuss the preliminary NORA "National Construction Agenda." For more information on the conference, go to <http://www.buildsafe.org> or <http://www.cpwr.com>.

News From Our Partners

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a new Web page for ordering OSHA publications, <http://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.html>. The Web page provides a more user-friendly approach and serves as a comprehensive resource for OSHA's safety and health products.

Communication Products

“Technology News 528 – Recirculation Filter is Key to Improving Dust Control in Enclosed Cabs”
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/pubs/pubreference/outputid2546.htm>.



Three New Health Hazard Evaluation Reports Now Available:

Manufacturing Sector – Evaluation of exposure to metalworking fluids (MWFs). NIOSH responded to a union request concerning dermal exposure to MWFs by employees working in a chain manufacturing plant. NIOSH found that employees had direct skin contact with MWFs, and several of the employees interviewed had rashes consistent with work-related contact dermatitis. Chemical analysis also showed that bulk MWFs contained a mix of skin irritants and allergens, and some samples also contained formaldehyde, showing an overall poor maintenance of MWFs in the plant. NIOSH recommended that a comprehensive MWF maintenance program be established at the plant, and that MWFs and biocides be replaced with less irritating components. NIOSH researchers also recommended that the plant educate employees about personal protective equipment (PPE), good skin care, and the hazards of MWF exposure. The final report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2005-0227-3049.pdf>.

Healthcare & Social Assistance Sector – Evaluation of noise levels. NIOSH responded to a management request at a hospital concerning noise exposures to personnel in the nutrition and food service department. NIOSH completed noise dosimetry measurements on food service workers and took sound level measurements throughout the work area. NIOSH found that the readings did not exceed OSHA criteria, but two employees' measurements did exceed the NIOSH recommended exposure limit. NIOSH recommended that metal racks and utensils be replaced with non-metal, food-safe materials to reduce metal-to-metal contact noise. NIOSH also recommended that food service employees wear hearing

protection devices until noise levels are reduced in high exposure areas. The final report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2007-0183-3047.pdf>.

Services Sector – Evaluation of work stress. NIOSH responded to a management and union request at a police department concerning work stress and noise exposure to dispatchers and 911 emergency phone operators. NIOSH researchers interviewed managers and employees, administered questionnaires examining workplace stressors and health-related outcomes, took saliva samples to assess physiologic reactions to stress, and evaluated noise exposure levels in the work area. NIOSH found that over 35% of employees self-reported symptoms consistent with major depression and 25% reported symptoms consistent with anxiety. Testing showed that salivary [cortisol](#) levels were not associated with self-reported data concerning work stressors. Further testing found that ambient noise levels measured in the work area were acceptable for office communication. NIOSH recommended that social support systems be improved within the organization, and that management and employees work to remedy routine problems in order to improve job satisfaction and reduce stress levels. Researchers also recommended that non-work-related conversations be limited in the call room to minimize distraction and reduce background noise. The final report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/1999-0199-3053.pdf>.

Upcoming Events

Call for Abstracts

- “NSTI Nanotech Annual Conference,” June 1 – 5, 2008, Boston, MA. Deadline is December 6, 2007. <http://www.nsti.org/Nanotech2008>.
- “14th International Society for Respiratory Protection,” September 14 – 18, 2008, Dublin, Ireland. Deadline is June 30, 2008. <http://www.isrp.com/dublin/>.

“International Roofing Expo 2008”

February 21 – 23, 2008, Las Vegas, NV. <http://www.theroofingexpo.com/Roofing07/public/Content.aspx?ID=6980&left=0&Nav=0>

“Work, Stress, and Health 2008: Health and Safe Work Through Research, Practice, and Partnerships”

March 6 – 8, 2008, Washington, DC. <http://www.apa.org/pi/work/wsh.html>

“Semiconductor Environmental, Safety and Health Association (SESHA) Annual Symposium and Expo”

March 25 – 29, 2008, Portland, OR. <http://www.seshaonline.org/meetings/2008/index.php3>

“Fire Department Instructors Conference 2008”

April 7 – 12, 2008, Indianapolis, IN. <http://fdic08.events.pennnet.com/fl//index.cfm>

“American Association of Occupational Health Nurses”

April 25 – May 2, 2008, Salt Lake City, UT. <http://www.aaohn.org/education/symposium-expo/index.cfm>

“International Association of Fire Chiefs 2008 International Hazardous Materials Response Teams Conference”

May 29 – June 1, 2008, Hunt Valley, MD. <http://iafc.confex.com/iafc/haz08/cfp.cgi>.

“2008 American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Exposition”

May 31 – June 5, 2008, Minneapolis, Minnesota. <http://www.aiha.org/Content/CE/aihce/aihce.htm>.

“2008 World Safety Conference and Exposition”

June 2 – 6, 2008, Las Vegas, NV. <http://www.nfpa.org/wsce>.

American Society of Safety Engineers “SAFETY 2008” Professional Development Conference and Exposition

June 9 – 12, 2008, Las Vegas, NV. <http://www.asse.org/speakerpage08>

“12th US/North American Mine Ventilation Symposium”

June 11 – 18, 2008, Reno, NV. <http://www.unr.edu/ventsymp2008>

“2008 ASTM Boulder Conference on Surface and Dermal Sampling”

August 4 – 8, 2008, Boulder, Colorado. Kevin Ashley in the NIOSH Division of Applied Research and Technology is the Symposium Chair. http://www.astm.org/cgi-bin/SoftCart.exe/filtrexx40.cgi?U+mystore+swqs8906+-P+EVENT_ID+1080+usr6/htdocs/astm.org/SYMPOSA/callforpapers.frm

“International Association of Fire Chiefs Fire Rescue International 2008”

August 14 – 16, 2008, Denver, CO. <http://www.iafc.org>

“8th Conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology”

November 12 – 14, 2008, Valencia, Spain. <http://www.ea-ohp.org>

Word of the Month

Cortisol: A steroid hormone that has been used as an objective measure of psychological stress. Typically, cortisol levels fluctuate during the day: highest early in the morning, tapers off throughout the day to its lowest point in the evening. However, during periods of stress, the adrenal gland produces high levels of cortisol as one way of supplying the body with the energy needed to respond efficiently and quickly.

[NIOSH eNews on the Web: www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/)

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