187 HHE Requests

- Services, Healthcare, and Manufacturing were the top 3 sectors for requests
- 6 out of every 10 requests came from employees

38 Site Visits

- 36 Workplaces
- 22 States
- 32 Cities
- 54,694 Miles Traveled

Outreach

- HHE website viewed 62,631 times
- 36 New HHE reports
  - Reports downloaded 35,145 times
- 779 Downloads of lead and noise databases
- 243 Facebook posts
  - Reached 248,614 people
- 30,842 Page “likes”
  - From 46 different countries
- 46 Presentations
- 18 Publications
Evaluation of Exposures and Respiratory Health at a Coffee Roasting and Packaging Plant

Findings
- Diacetyl air levels were highest during grinding and blending roasted coffee beans.
- Exposures were higher when the bay doors were closed.
- 10 full-shift air samples exceeded the NIOSH recommended exposure limit for diacetyl.

Eye, nose, and sinus symptoms were the most common symptoms among employees.
- 4 times as many employees reported wheezing than expected.
- 1 employee had abnormal spirometry and 1 had high exhaled nitric oxide, a marker of allergic airways.

Recommendations
- Increase amount of fresh outdoor air and improve plant ventilation.
- Find alternative method to hand-blending roasted beans.
- Avoid placing head directly inside storage bins of roasted beans.

Report available here: https://go.usa.gov/xneSf

Evaluation of Hazards during Harvesting and Processing Cannabis at an Outdoor Organic Farm

Findings
- Employees used repetitive hand motions when trimming cannabis, which could lead to hand and wrist musculoskeletal disorders.
- Tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive component in cannabis, was detected on all surface wipe samples.
- Botrytis cinerea, a plant pathogen that can cause allergic reactions, was the main fungal species found in the air.

Recommendations
- Provide frequent breaks for employees when trimming cannabis by hand.
- Develop a plan to rotate employees among jobs that use different muscles.
- Wear nonlatex gloves when handling cannabis.
- Develop a cleaning schedule to remove tetrahydrocannabinol from work and tool surfaces.

Report available here: https://go.usa.gov/xneS3
Get an inside glimpse into how we conduct our evaluations by watching our 3 new videos! A camera crew captured the action during our visit to an electronics recycler.

Learn how we measure for contaminants and harmful materials in the air, on employees’ hands and workplace surfaces, and in employees’ bodies.

Hear directly from the employer and employees about what it is like to participate in an HHE evaluation and their experience working with the program.

Grab some popcorn and watch the videos here: https://go.usa.gov/xneSr
Evaluation of Fire Fighters’ Mental Health
Symptoms and Exposure to Traumatic Events,
Job Stress, and Bloodborne Pathogens

Findings
- Firefighters reported high job stress and all experienced traumatic events at work
- Some firefighters’ symptoms were consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression
- 67% Reported handling used needles or sharps
- 40% Reported coming into contact with drugs
- 16% Reported some type of potential bloodborne pathogen exposure

Recommendations
- Provide training on suicide prevention, psychological first aid, and stress
- Use nitrile gloves during potential bloodborne pathogen exposures and opioid overdose responses
- Report potential exposures, symptoms, and injuries to supervisors

Evaluation of Chemical Exposures at a Vape Shop

Findings
- Employees vaped at work
- Employees did not wear gloves when handling liquids containing nicotine
- Nicotine solution was stored in the same refrigerator as employees’ food
- Air concentrations of vaping-related chemicals were below occupational exposure limits

Recommendations
- Prohibit vaping in the shop with e-liquids that contain diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione
- Wear nitrile gloves when handling liquids that contain nicotine
- Do not store chemicals in food storage areas
- Inspect and maintain the shop’s exhaust ventilation

Report available here: https://go.usa.gov/xneSc

Report available here: https://go.usa.gov/xneSx
Followback Program

After an evaluation, we follow up with the workplace to see how we did and learn how things changed in the workplace. We do this through mailed surveys, phone calls, and return visits. Here’s what some employers, employees, and union representatives had to say:

“NIOSH made things better in our workplace. The positive changes that have taken place are the reaffirmation of our current practices and have supported the changes that we needed to make.”

“I was very impressed with our NIOSH team. They... worked closely with our medical provider to ensure the program put in place was compliant and our employees were protected.”

“NIOSH staff were very professional and listened well to management and labor concerns. No matter how the findings worked out, it was advantageous to have the study conducted by a highly credible organization like NIOSH.”

“The HHE was very informative. The employees have a better understanding of the resources available to them and how to deal with possible workplace hazards.”

Kendra Broadwater trained responders in Texas on the Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance (ERHMS™) framework. Her team trained 135 staff members from the Texas State Health Department, the Harris County Health Department, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and other community organizations.

While assessing damage at health clinics and hospitals in Puerto Rico, Mike Grant and Mark Methner helped to streamline the information collection process. Their work helped to create an app for responders to use in the field.

Donnie Booher trained and fit-tested approximately 120 archivists from the Smithsonian Institute, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Puerto Rican government.
The mission of the NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation Program is to respond to requests from employees, employers, and union representatives to evaluate potential health hazards in their workplace.

These evaluations are done at no cost to the requestor. Once the evaluation is complete, recommendations are made on ways to reduce or eliminate identified hazards. Health Hazard Evaluations can help reduce hazards and create healthier workplaces.