



NIOSH Dose Reconstruction Project Introductory Meeting on Development of Site Profile For Argonne National Laboratory-East

Date:

June 3, 2005

Meeting with:

Service Employees International Union Local 73

Attendees:

Jon Baker, SEIU Local 73, Business Representative

William Murray, Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU)

Mark Lewis, Advanced Technologies and Laboratories International, Inc. (ATL)

Mary Elliott, ATL

Proceedings:

The meeting began at approximately 8:00 am as participants introduced themselves. Mark Lewis gave a brief introduction of the program, describing the need for workers to provide information for the Site Profile as “taking a snapshot of the past,” recalling information that may be helpful to make the document a claimant-favorable instrument for reconstructing radiation doses. He explained that he had worked for 29 years at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant and was a member of the PACE union, now United Steelworkers of America (USW), there for many years. He said that he is now employed by ATL International, a subcontractor to Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU), to conduct worker outreach with labor unions that have members associated with the nuclear weapons complex.

Mr. Lewis stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the types of information that would be important in developing the Argonne National Laboratory-East Site Profile. He commented that notes were being taken to ensure accuracy of the minutes.

Bill Murray began his presentation by describing three phases in which it is important to involve the workers in the development of the site profile:

1. At the beginning of the Site Profile development process, when the ORAU team meets with workers to get their input.
2. A rollout meeting after the Site Profile is completed.
3. A continuing dialogue with the workers and union representatives, which allows for additional input that can lead to revisions in the document.

Mr. Murray explained the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) was enacted by Congress to compensate workers who became ill as a result of occupational exposure to radiation or toxic chemicals in the nuclear weapons industry. He described the roles of the Department of Labor (DOL) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Office of Compensation Analysis and Support (OCAS) in implementing the program.



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He explained that due to the large number of claims, NIOSH had contracted with Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) to perform dose reconstructions for claims filed under Subtitle B of the Act. He said that government and contractor records are used in writing the Site Profile, and that worker input is necessary to give the workers' perspective and ensure that the document is not biased in favor of the employer or the government. He also explained that the authors of the Site Profile are not affiliated with the site so there will be no conflict of interest.

Mr. Murray discussed the main components of a Site Profile: site processes and activities, external dose, internal dose, environmental dose, and medical dose. He described how the dose reconstruction is done using this information -- the more information available, the more accurate the dose reconstruction. This is why it is so important to get input from the workers' standpoint. They are the site experts, the ones who know what happened at the site.

Mr. Murray said that if a person has classified information that could be used in the Site Profile, secure interviews can be arranged.

Mr. Murray added that all additional sources of information should be explored. Employees and retirees may have information that wasn't included in the government and company records; or they may be able to identify other sources of information. If any such information is available, it should be sent directly to NIOSH by mail or e-mail.

Discussion Session – Q/A

Jon Baker:

Does the employer have any liability in this program?

Bill Murray:

No, the claimant must sign a waiver to receive the compensation.

Jon Baker:

Who does the claimants' interviews?

Bill Murray:

Interviews are conducted by employees from the ORAU Team's telephone center who have completed Privacy Act training. During the interview, the claimant has the opportunity to discuss their personal work history including what parts of the plant they were assigned to, whether or not they were monitored, and other specific issues pertinent to their claim. All that information will be considered in the dose reconstruction.

Any secure interviews are conducted by employees with government clearances.

Jon Baker:

Is the employer interviewed?

Bill Murray:

No, DOE reports are used to get information for the Site Profile.



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Jon Baker:

I would like a two-page sheet with a succinct, non-technical explanation of the information you have given me here today. Our union sends out a monthly newsletter to members and retirees, and I would like to include something regarding your program before you meet with the union members.

Bill Murray:

We will put something together and forward it as soon as possible.

Mark Lewis:

The DOL Resource Center for your area is located in Paducah, Kentucky. Their office will assist your employees if they need help filing claims. I have been in contact with the people there, and you should be hearing from them soon.

Jon Baker:

I've already received a letter from Jean Gross. It would expedite matters if we could arrange a joint meeting with your team and the DOL Resource Center later this summer, possibly July or August.

Mark Lewis:

I will check with the Resource Center and NIOSH to see if that can be arranged.

Mr. Baker concluded the meeting at approximately 8:45 am by thanking the ORAU team for meeting with him. Mr. Murray and Mr. Lewis thanked Mr. Baker for his time, and said they looked forward to meeting with him again.