

THE OSHEP NEWSLETTER

A quarterly publication developed and written by the Occupational Safety and Health Education Program, a partnership between New Jersey State AFL-CIO and Rutgers University, and funded by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development



The Occupational Safety and Health Education Program: Partnership for Safe, Secure & Healthy Workplaces

The new OSHEP newsletter is now formatted to provide the same great information in a neat, succinct and easy to follow format. Future editions will provide information on important developments on safety and health as well as upcoming events around the state and region.

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The OSHEP Year in Review

As the OSHEP staff wraps up another successful year of training, outreach and education for the 2009 Fiscal Year, we look back at some of the highlights and accomplishments of the program so far:

- Renewal of partnership with the Rutgers University Labor Education Center, School of Management and Labor Relations. We are especially proud that Dr. Sue Schurman, Dean of University College, Dr. Adrienne Eaton, Chair of Labor Studies and Dr. Barry Schlegel have joined OSHEP as staff on this growing and ever-expanding program.
- Continued success in providing Security Awareness and Preparedness training to New Jersey's Chemical and Petroleum Industry. OSHEP staff trained approximately 375 workers in the Chemical and Petroleum sector in New Jersey in FY 2009 with continued commitments to provide training to companies for the coming months. As the leader in establishing this training requirement and providing this state-approved curriculum to companies at no cost, OSHEP staff continues to diligently track employee input and compliance with the Best Practices Standard.
- Provided the first ever English-Hindi Safety and Health Train-the-Trainer for Hotel and Housekeeping employees at UNITEHERE Local 54 in Atlantic City. This bi-lingual training course has previously been offered in Spanish and Creole.
- Provided Safety and Health Committee training to ShopRite employees and UFCW Local 152 members in Somers Point. This training is part of a training and intervention model to empower joint-labor management safety and health committees to create safer workplaces.
- Organized a successful 2009 OSHEP Conference with a record breaking turnout of approximately 160 attendees. Conference attendees included safety and health professionals, human resource managers, safety managers, students, and rank-and-file union members.

The New US DOL Budget

Safety and health advocates are optimistic about the positive changes outlined in the new US DOL Budget for Fiscal Year 2010. Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, outlined the proposal, indicating a move towards restoring worker protection programs. OSHA sees an increase of 10 percent in its budget from Fiscal Year 2009 and according to the Assistant Secretary of OSHA, Jordan Barab, OSHA is looking to hire 160 new enforcement staff.



From a global perspective, the W.H.O. is now reporting nearly 40,000 laboratory confirmed cases of novel H1N1 in 88 countries, and reporting 167 deaths.

“..there are two areas of the country that continue to see increased numbers of patients in the clinic with influenza-like illness. And both of those are in the northeast part of the United States.”

Dr. Daniel Jernigan, the Deputy Director of the Influenza Division at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC Telebriefing, June 18, 2009.

Pandemic Flu Preparedness for the Workplace

A Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health will meet on June 25 to address H1N1 influenza outreach and education. As a result of this council, OSHA may change its stance on this critical topic and issue requirements for workplaces to protect working families from the spread of H1N1. In the meantime, safety and health advocates around the nation, and New Jersey, continue their campaign to institute Pandemic Flu Preparedness plans for worker protection.

The lack of a workplace preparedness plan will severely cripple continuity of business and expose workers and their families to the flu. Here are some initial steps that employers can take in order to protect their employees and businesses from the spread of the H1N1 virus:

- Development of a comprehensive site-specific Exposure Control Plan that includes a method for determining exposure, medical surveillance, vaccinations, training on hazards and control measures, reporting and recordkeeping.
- Involvement of employees in development of a plan to protect against spread of influenza.
- An outline of specific controls to prevent and limit exposure for employees and communities at large including physical barriers where appropriate and approved personal protective equipment such as gloves, respirators, safety glasses etc.
- Training and information for employees to recognize signs and symptoms, follow proper hygiene procedures and reporting procedures for exposure and treatment.
- Provisions for emergency responders and other essential personnel who may be exposed while working away from fixed facilities.
- Proper housekeeping measures and other work practice controls for the workplace.

As with any effective workplace policy, employers should work with employees to identify ways to modify work practices and institute controls that are understood and followed by all employees. Employers should also consider offering enhanced medical monitoring of employees in very high and high risk work environments.

The OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens standard can act as a good guiding document to establish a Pandemic Flu Preparedness and Prevention Plan.

For more information on Pandemic Flu Preparedness, you can visit the following websites that provide information on workplace preparedness:

- OSHA Pandemic Flu page

<http://osha.gov/dsg/topics/pandemicflu/index.html>

- The Pandemic Flu website for Workplace Planning

<http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/index.html>

- The CDC H1N1 Flu Resources for Businesses and Employers

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/>

- New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services H1N1 Influenza Page

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/er/h1n1/>

Protecting Workers on the Job: Seven Priorities for Federal Action in 2009

The National Council on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) and the American Public Health Association Occupational Safety and Health section have drafted seven key recommendations for the Obama Administration to improve workers' safety and health. These recommendations were endorsed in early January by a national coalition of over 70 advocacy groups including labor, immigrant rights, and environmental groups. Key recommendations in this platform include:

- Put worker safety and health first by making it a top priority for the President and Congress.
- Increase worker participation in workplace safety and health programs and increase worker protection against retaliation.
- Institute tougher enforcement of existing regulations in OSHA to ensure health and safety protection of all workers.
- Count all occupational injuries and illnesses and increase funding for Federal and State-based public health tracking programs.
- Eliminate disparities in the high rates of deaths, injuries and illnesses among all workers.

To see the complete document on the web, go to

<http://www.coshnetwork.org/node/145>.

Gearing up for Summer: Heat Stress on the Job

Heat stress is an often overlooked job hazard that can result in serious illness and even death. High temperature and humidity; direct sun or heat; limited air movement; physical exertion; poor physical condition; some medicines; inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces; and insufficient water intake can all lead to heat stress. Emergency response and recovery workers can be especially susceptible to heat stress as a result of high heat environments, extended work hours, and bulky protective clothing. It is important to understand the signs and symptoms of a variety of heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rashes.

Here are some simple and effective ways to reduce potential heat-related illnesses at work—

- Replace fluids by providing cool water or cool fluids
- Provide recovery areas
- Reschedule hot jobs or provide frequent breaks
- Monitor workers for signs related to heat exposure
- Provide cool, loose fitting breathable work clothing

The Skinny on the Fat Fines for New Jersey's Atlantic States Cast Iron Pipe Company

On April 24, the U.S. District Court sentenced the Atlantic States Cast Iron Pipe Co. of Phillipsburg, New Jersey to pay a fine of \$8 million for flagrant abuse of environmental and worker safety laws as well as obstruction of investigations of conduct.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency called this the longest trial in environmental crimes history. Prior to this ruling, four former managers of the company were sentenced to

federal prison for terms ranging from 6 to 70 months. In April of 2006, a jury convicted the company and the four managers of engaging in an 8-year conspiracy to pollute the air and Delaware River in violation of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, expose its employees to dangerous conditions and impede and obstruct federal regulatory and criminal investigations.

Alabama based McWane Corporation is one of the world's largest manufacturers of steel pipe and has a reputation as one of the worst and most persistent violators of our nation's worker safety and environmental laws.



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The OSHEP Partnership

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO and the Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations work together to make workplaces safer, and to enhance the skills of New Jersey's workforce. Funded by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, OSHEP partners with employers, local unions, and other organizations to create an active "culture of safety" in workplaces through innovative training and education.

For more information on training and other services provided by OSHEP, please contact OSHEP at 609-989-8289 or visit us on the web at www.njafclcio.org/oshep.

We're on the Web!

<http://www.njafclcio.org/oshep>

National Response Team releases guidance document for Disaster Site Workers

The U.S. National Response Team, is an organization of 16 Federal departments and agencies responsible for coordinating emergency preparedness and response to oil and hazardous substance pollution incidents.

On April 30, 2009, the NRT released a technical two-volume document titled *Guidance for Managing Worker Fatigue During Disaster Operations*.

Volume 1 of this document is intended to serve as a hands-on manual to assist organizations with the development of programs and plans to address worker fatigue during large-scale disaster operations, such

as those following the Oklahoma City bombing, the 9-11 attacks, anthrax contamination, the Columbia Space Shuttle Recovery, and Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. It contains helpful information on fatigue risk factors, recommendations for a Fatigue Management Plan, Risk Assessment Tools, and samples and templates for developing an Incident-Specific Fatigue Management Plan.

The TAD identifies four essential components for the development of fatigue management programs and plans – assessment, risk factors, controls, and evaluation – and discusses the kinds of information needed for each component.

The Guidance document can be ac-

cessed on the web at <http://www.nrt.org/Production/NRT/NRTWeb.nsf/AllAttachmentsByTitle/SA-1049TADFinal/SFile/TADfinal.pdf?OpenElement>



After a large-scale disaster, workers often work longer shifts and more consecutive shifts than they would typically work during a traditional 40-hour work week.