

Secretary of the Navy Tells Congress - VPP is Part of Navy's Plan for "Winning Today...While Transforming to Win Tomorrow"

In a statement before the United States Senate, Defense Appropriations Committee entitled "Winning Today...While Transforming to Win Tomorrow," Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England presented the Navy's fiscal year 2006 budget request, which he characterized as being necessary for "*prevailing in today's environment and bridging for a successful future.*"

In testimony given in March, 2005, the Secretary England described the sailors and marines within the Department of the Navy (DON) as the key element to any successful transformation to prepare for the future. In preparing for the future, he stated that the DON will accomplish all assigned missions by changing structure, gaining efficiencies from technology, altering the workforce mix, and adopting new or best practices. Importantly, he addressed safety as a major element in this process and a major element for which funding was requested.

In his review of safety, the Secretary made specific mention of DON's pursuit of the Voluntary Protection Program, telling the U.S. Senate that:

"The Department is pursuing Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) status and has achieved significant reduction in lost workdays due to injuries at key installations."

Secretary England further emphasized safety, telling the Senators that "*The DON has embraced safety as a readiness multiplier. The Naval leadership team (Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), and the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV)) emphasized safety and mishap reduction as one of our published top ten 2005 objectives for the Department.*"

The DON's commitment to utilize VPP as a primary method to address and improve safety follows similar Department-wide commitments made by other branches of government such as the Department of Energy and the United States Postal Service. DOE developed a VPP effort in 1992 and presently has 23 STAR sites and 2 Merit sites in their VPP, with over 34,000 employees working at DOE-VPP sites.

A full copy of the Secretary of the Navy's statement is on the Navy web site at:
<http://www.navy.mil/navydata/people/secnav/england/testimony/england050316.pdf>