Proceedings of the Scientific Workshop on the Health Effects of Electric and Magnetic Fields on Workers

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The bibliography used as the basis for the Scientific Workshop on the Health Effects of Electric and Magnetic Fields on Workers [This workshop was originally entitled "Scientific Workshop on the Health Effects of Electromagnetic Radiation on Workers."] is available from the National Technical Information Service.

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PREFACE

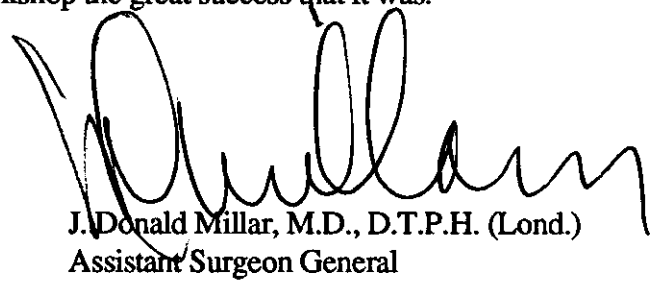
The possibility of adverse health effects from exposure to electric and magnetic fields (EMF) has generated a heated controversy in recent years, "debated" before the public through the national broadcast and print media. The American worker would justifiably be concerned and deserves a clear message on this issue. It is usually the case with environmental exposures that workers are exposed "first and worst," as potentially hazardous chemicals, materials, and agents are introduced first for industrial purposes, and used in ways that expose workers to much higher concentrations than would generally occur in the community. This is true for EMF among certain occupations in utilities and other industries where frequent, persistent, or high exposures may occur.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is the federal research agency charged with "assuring safe and healthful working conditions" for all workers. Towards this end, it is the responsibility of NIOSH to lead in the development of national scientific priorities. In January 1991, NIOSH convened a scientific workshop to develop a research agenda on the health effects of EMF and methods for reducing exposures.

At the workshop, we brought together leading scientists to discuss the relevant aspects of a research agenda and prevention strategies. We endeavored to clarify what is known, and to identify what is not known so as to plan a research agenda that will fill gaps in our current knowledge. In this way, we intend to push forward the availability of knowledge necessary for the protection of workers. We hope this coalescing of expertise will assist the progress of all partners in this field. We need to focus our efforts in evaluating the potential hazards of EMF until we understand the nature and extent of any effects and how to prevent them. Then, we will bring our findings to occupational safety and health professionals, employers, and employees.

This year, NIOSH marks its 20th anniversary. I am delighted that we started this anniversary year with this workshop. It is in the best tradition of the Institute. I hope you will find these Proceedings useful. For those who attended the workshop, this document will serve as a record of the excellent plenary papers presented. For those who were not able to attend, and for others wishing to gain insight into EMF research needs, we trust this text will serve as an excellent reference.

Finally, I wish to thank the Chair and Co-Chair of this workshop, Mr. Philip Bierbaum and Dr. John Peters. Dr. Peters was instrumental in the selection of presenters and the program content; Mr. Bierbaum was responsible for organizing it all. Of course, each of the individual plenary paper presenters, panel moderators and rapporteurs, and panel members made possible this text. I applaud all of these efforts in making the workshop the great success that it was.



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