



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH INFORMATION

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

- In 2002, more than 4.7 million workers sustained work-related injuries and illnesses in the private sector alone, and an average of 15 workers died from work-related injuries each day.
- The direct costs of occupational injuries and illnesses were estimated to be \$45.8 billion in 2001 (2003 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index). The indirect costs were estimated to be an additional \$137.4 to \$229 billion.
- Policy-related, technical, and educational materials are critical in assisting both individuals and decision makers in taking appropriate actions to prevent and reduce work-related illnesses and injuries.

WHAT HAS NIOSH ACCOMPLISHED?

Each year, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) translates occupational research findings into various media to be used by public health policymakers and practitioners, employers, and workers. This information provides a scientific basis for policy development and is used to identify previously unrecognized threats to worker health and safety and to develop related prevention strategies and workplace solutions. Educational materials provide targeted populations (e.g., workers, employers, and health practitioners) with practical information about risks and prevention. Each year, NIOSH distributes over 1 million copies of occupational safety and health documents through its publications clearinghouse. Occupational safety and health information also is available in both English and Spanish through NIOSH's Web site.

Examples of program in action:

- NIOSH published *Filtration and Air-Cleaning Systems to Protect Building Environments from Airborne Chemical, Biological, or Radiological Attacks*, which provides specific recommendations to protect building air environments from a terrorist release of chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants.
- NIOSH published online the *NIOSH Hearing Protector Device Compendium*, which contains information on hearing protectors sold in the United States. This new database is searchable by product type, manufacturer, and Noise Reduction Rating.
- NIOSH published the *Respirator Fact Sheet: What You Should Know in Deciding Whether to Buy Escape Hoods, Gas Masks, or Other Respirators for Preparedness at Home and Work*, which provides basic, clearly explained information to assist employers, employees, and consumers who are considering purchasing escape hoods or other respirators.
- NIOSH published *Asphalt Fume Exposure During the Application of Hot Asphalt to Roofs*. Developed through a collaborative effort among NIOSH, the National Roofing Contractors Association, the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association, the Asphalt Institute, and the United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers, the document identifies engineering controls and work practices that can reduce exposures to asphalt fumes.
- NIOSH published the *Work-Related Lung Disease Surveillance Report 2002*. The sixth in a series of documents on work-related respiratory diseases and associated exposures, the report includes information for years 1997-1999, with new sections on malignant mesothelioma, lung cancer, other interstitial pulmonary disease, and smoking status by industry and occupation.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- NIOSH will continue to provide key information to individuals and decision makers to help reduce work-related injuries and illnesses.
- NIOSH will seek new and better ways of reaching its stakeholders, including through expanded use of the Internet as a method of information dissemination.
- NIOSH will evaluate its publications to assess their value and utility among primary users of this information.
- NIOSH will explore methods of better communicating occupational safety and health information to small businesses.

Additional information is available at www.cdc.gov/niosh/pubs.html. For more information on other NIOSH programs, visit www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/pib/.

