

How Do I Request an HHE?

Requests must be submitted in writing to NIOSH. Request forms may be obtained from any of the following NIOSH offices. They can also be submitted from the Internet by accessing the NIOSH HHE home page at www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe

How Do I Contact NIOSH?

NIOSH Toll free number:
1-800-356-4674 (1-800-35-NIOSH)

Cincinnati, Ohio

*NIOSH, Hazard Evaluations and Technical Assistance Branch (HETAB), MS R-9
4676 Columbia Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45226-1998
(513) 841-4382 FAX: (513) 841-4488*

Morgantown, West Virginia

*NIOSH, Field Studies Branch (FSB)
1095 Willowdale Road
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505-2845
(304) 285-5711 FAX: (304) 285-5796*

S. Dartmouth, Massachusetts

*NIOSH, New England Field Office
P.O. Box 87040
S. Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02748-0701
(508) 997-6126*

Atlanta, Georgia

*NIOSH, Atlanta Field Office
1600 Clifton Road
Room 3122, MS D37
Atlanta, Georgia 30333
(404) 498-2550*

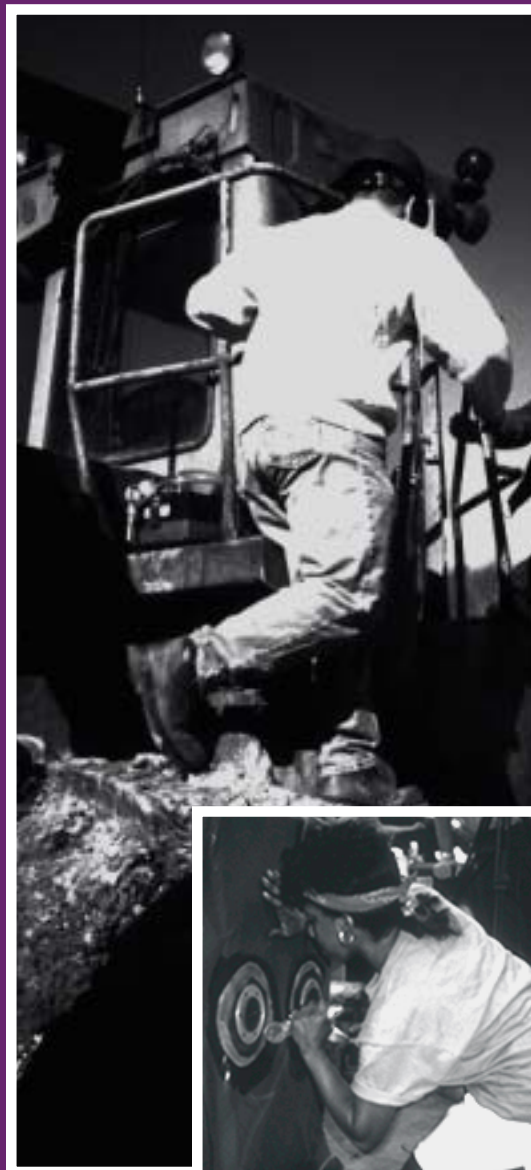
Denver, Colorado

*NIOSH, Denver Field Office
P.O. Box 25226
Denver, Colorado 80225-0226
(303) 236-6032*

or visit the NIOSH HHE homepage on the World Wide Web at www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe



Health Hazard Evaluation Program



For Information on Other Occupational Safety and Health Concerns
Call NIOSH at: 1-800-35-NIOSH (1-800-356-4674)
Or Visit the NIOSH Homepage at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

What is NIOSH?

NIOSH stands for National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. It is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency in the Department of Health and Human Services. NIOSH was created to do four jobs:

- Respond to requests to study workplace hazards
- Do research to prevent health or safety problems at work
- Propose health and safety rules and regulations
- Train occupational safety and health experts

NIOSH should not be confused with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), an agency in the Department of Labor whose main mission is setting and enforcing standards to protect employee health and safety. NIOSH is not an enforcement agency.

What is a Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE)?

A Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) is the study of a workplace to see if workers are exposed to hazardous materials or harmful conditions. An HHE is done in response to concerns of workers, their representatives, or employers about specific workplace problems. Workplace agents studied by NIOSH include chemicals, biological agents, work stress, heat stress, noise, radiation, and ergonomic stressors.

The NIOSH HHE program evaluates new or unusual hazards. To do this, a visit to the workplace is often required to study the problems where they exist. Other more common hazards are also studied if they are not fully understood, but a visit to the workplace may not be needed.

Who Can Request an HHE?

Employees

A worker can ask for an HHE:

- If the person filling out the form now works at the site to be studied.

- If two or more co-workers also sign the HHE form. (Note: For a work area where three or fewer employees work, one employee can make a request alone.)

Employee Representatives

Any officer of a labor union that represents the workers may request an HHE.

Employers

Any official may ask for an HHE.

Employees of Federal, State, and Local Agencies

Employees of federal government agencies, their representatives, or any management official can request an HHE.

For workers in state or local government agencies, the situation is more complicated. In general, NIOSH can respond to these requests, but the employer may have to agree to it.

What Happens During an HHE?

A NIOSH project officer will contact the person who asked for the HHE, the employer, and the local union representative (if any) to talk about the request. It may be decided that another agency would be more helpful or that an information packet could be sent instead of making a site visit. In some cases, however, NIOSH must visit the workplace.

NIOSH may use several ways to study a workplace:

- Watching work practices
- Sampling to measure worker exposures
- Holding confidential interviews with workers
- Doing medical tests or physical examinations of employees
- Reviewing injury and illness records and data on worker exposures, medical tests, and job histories

Sometimes more than one visit to the workplace may be needed to finish an HHE. There is no cost for the study and participation by workers is voluntary.

How Is the Privacy of Employees Protected?

Workers who ask for the HHE can have their names kept confidential by NIOSH. In addition, NIOSH always safeguards individually identifiable records, questionnaires, interviews, and medical results. Finally, the Occupational Safety and Health Act forbids employers from retaliating or punishing workers who have asked for an HHE or who cooperate with NIOSH researchers.

How Are the HHE Results Reported?

At the end of a visit to the workplace, NIOSH researchers typically give a verbal report to employer and worker representatives. NIOSH researchers may also give results over the phone. These results, however, may be preliminary.

Sometimes NIOSH gives a written report while a study is still on-going.

NIOSH publishes a final HHE report after all the information and data have been analyzed. This report will tell what was found and give the recommendations. Copies of this report are sent to the requester, the employer, worker representatives, OSHA, and other appropriate agencies.

The final report is public information. Copies are offered to as wide an audience as possible. NIOSH wants others to benefit from its results and recommendations.

The employer is required to post the final report in an obvious place where workers from all the studied areas can read it.

Although NIOSH cannot enforce their recommendations, experience shows that many employers attempt to correct problems identified in the HHE report.