



AN ATTACK ON AMERICA'S WORKFORCE

DOL AGENCIES PROVIDE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

On September 11, 2001, terrorists launched a calculated assault on our nation at work—directly striking the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Determined that these attacks would not result in still more tragedy during the rescue and recovery operations, DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) responded to both disaster locations to protect the health and safety of the rescue workers. More than 200 OSHA staff from offices around the country responded to the devastation in lower Manhattan, advising and coaching rescuers, testing air and debris samples, distributing and fit-testing respirators, and providing other expertise and support. OSHA personnel worked around the clock to ensure the safety and health of workers at one of the most hazardous job sites in the country.

After American Airlines flight 77 hit the Pentagon, a three-person OSHA team and the Mine Emergency Unit of the Mine Safety and Health Administration responded and made their special skills available to the on-site rescue and recovery operations, while nurses from DOL's Federal Workers' Compensation Program attended to injured Federal workers taken to local hospitals. With little but victims' names and Social Security numbers to go by, the nurses teamed with hospital staff to guarantee top quality care, arranged nearby housing for families, and expedited compensation and medical payments. ■

“WE’VE GOT A JOB TO DO, ALL OF US”

DOL ASSISTANCE SPEEDS RECOVERY

President Bush said it best in presenting his Back to Work Relief Package October 4 at the Department of Labor — “We’ve got a job to do, all of us.” DOL quickly responded to the President’s call expediting recovery assistance.

- At National Airport, DOL employees helped process unemployment assistance applications for several thousand people, many of whom lost jobs in the shops, restaurants, and services that support a normally thriving airport.
- To launch recovery efforts in New York, DOL employees staffed a special benefits and information assistance center in the city’s Chinatown for workers whose jobs were lost as a result of the attack.
- Nurses of DOL’s Workers’ Compensation Program continued to assist injured Federal workers — addressing longer term needs such as overseeing physical therapy and ensuring homes and offices can accommodate recovering patients’ physical needs.
- Through outreach events, its website, and pamphlets, including new materials in Spanish and Chinese, DOL’s Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration assisted workers impacted by the September 11 disaster to reach critical decisions about their families’ pension and health benefits.
- Staff from the Veterans’ Employment and Training Service briefed reservists and National Guard members before activation about the Federal law guaranteeing the return of their civilian jobs.
- The Secretary of Labor signed the World Trade Center Emergency Project Partnership Agreement with the City of New York, contractors, and other organizations to protect the safety and health of the thousands of disaster recovery workers still laboring at the World Trade Center disaster site. ■

