



NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL OSHA UP TO DATE

VOL. XIII, NO. 3 - FEBRUARY 1984

OSHA Hazard Communication Standard Pre-empts State Laws, Auchter Says

The federal hazard communication standard will pre-empt state right-to-know regulations in states without approved plans, OSHA head Thorne Auchter has announced. Although OSHA itself will take no pre-emptive action, the agency will enforce its standard on the effective date of November 1985, Auchter said.

States that have approved plans must meet the criteria for standards that are as effective as OSHA standards, Auchter said. The states' right-to-know rules are generally favored by organized labor leaders, who see the state rules as more stringent.

In a petition filed by Public Citizen Litigation Group in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, several groups charge that OSHA's hazard communication standards fails to provide adequate information on workplace hazards and is inconsistent with the OSHA Act. Plaintiffs, who filed suit the same day the standard was issued, include District 8 Council, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union; the Occupational Safety and Health Committees or councils from Connecticut, Chicago, North Carolina, Western Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, D.C.

Research Grants Available from NIOSH

NIOSH will accept competitive grant applications for career awards in occupational safety and health research until March 16, 1984, the agency has announced. Letters of intent should be submitted by February 17. The awards, which may be as much as \$30,000 a year for up to three years, are intended to encourage development of research skills, provide support for researchers working in occupational safety and health, and create a pool of highly qualified investigators.

Proposed research projects must be in one of the following categories: occupationally related respiratory diseases, musculoskeletal injuries, cancers, cardiovascular effects, traumatic injuries, reproductive effects, neurologic effects, noise-induced hearing loss, skin disease, and psychologic disorders. Grants are also available for research on engineering controls and respirators.

Individuals and organizations may apply for grants. Individuals must have a doctorate and two years of post-doctoral research, not be in a tenured position or above the rank of associate professor, and be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

NIOSH Announces Members of Science Advisory Board

NIOSH director J. Donald Millar has announced the membership of the Board on Scientific Advisors, which has been planned for some time with the purpose of overseeing



NIOSH projects. The board, which is partly intended to lend more credence to NIOSH's work, will provide advice and guidance on research projects to ensure scientific quality, timeliness, utility, and proper dissemination of results.

Board members include:

- John Doull, M.D., Ph.D., director, Medical Center Safety Office, Department of Pharmacology, University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City, Kansas.
- Robert L. Harris Jr., Ph.D, professor of environmental engineering, Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, School of Public Health, and director, Occupational Health Studies Group, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Steven Michael Horvath, Ph.D., professor of biomedical engineering, director, Institute of Environmental Stress; and chairman, Department of Ergonomics and Occupational Health Sciences, University of California, Santa Barbara.
- Abraham M. Lilienfeld, M.D., M.P.H., University Distinguished Service Professor of Epidemiology, and director, MPH Program, Johns Hopkins Schools of Hygiene and Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Sheldon D. Murphy, Ph.D., professor and chairman, Department of Environmental Health, University of Washington, Seattle.
- Janet Osteryoung, Ph.D., professor of chemistry, State University of New York, Buffalo.
- Richard G. Pearson, Ph.D., professor of industrial engineering and psychology, Department of Industrial Engineering, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.
- Marilyn B. Rubin, M.S.N., Ph.D., professor of nursing, and coordinator, Graduate Medical-Surgical Nursing, St. Louis University, School of Nursing and Allied Health Professions, St. Louis, Missouri.
- George Sperling, Ph.D., professor of psychology, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, New York University, New York.
- James L. Whittenberger, M.D., professor of public health and professor of physiology, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston.

State Involvement and Data Collection To Be NIOSH Priorities

Expanding the role of state and local health departments in occupational safety and broadening the data collection presently used will be NIOSH's priorities over the next two years, agency director J. Donald Millar has announced. Millar said at a NACOSH meeting in Atlanta that OSHA cannot touch all companies, and that state and local departments must fill the gap. "The state and local health departments have enormous strength," the director said. "There is clearly an underserved constituency out there." The riskiest businesses may be those that are big enough to have hazards but too small to afford a comprehensive OSHA program, Millar said.

Millar also said that NIOSH surveillance has not been complete. The institute presently collects data through the Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System. NEISS figures, Millar said, are gathered from hospital emergency rooms and do not include work-related injuries and diseases that are treated by private physicians, corporate medical services, or industrial clinics. Millar said that although collecting data from private physicians will be difficult, doctors would probably cooperate if they knew the data were being put to good use.

OSHA Encouraging Health Protection Programs

OSHA has announced a new policy to encourage development of employee health protection programs in each of the nation's millions of workplaces. Agency head Thorne Auchter said that OSHA intends to establish guidelines for the programs and will

001250

provide consultation and training services. Comprehensive programs tailored to each worksite will play a key role in preventing job-related illnesses, Auchter said. Both field office and national office staffs will be involved in promoting the programs.

The policy comes after two years of research, including demonstration projects, and a health programs conference which brought together experts from labor, management, professional organizations, and state governments, Auchter said. His agency's in-house research included revisions to its system for targeting health inspections, demonstration projects, and alternate health inspection procedures that more efficiently use resources.

A new set of program evaluation criteria will be developed for use by both compliance and consultation staffs. New Directions grant approval criteria will also be examined and possibly revised to emphasize assistance to groups engaged in improving workplace health protection systems. Approaches which are comprehensive and take a systems approach will be encouraged, OSHA said.

Training and education materials, aimed at improving management of safety and health programs, will be developed and made available. Expansion of training opportunities at the OSHA Training Institute is also being considered.

Electrical Safety Guide Available From OSHA

OSHA has issued an illustrated guide for electrical safety to provide a better understanding of the agency's safety requirements for employees and employers with limited training in the field of electricity. The 172-page publication, An Illustrated Guide to Electrical Safety, serves as a supplement to OSHA's electrical safety standards (29 CFR 1910, Subpart S). The handbook was developed to help reduce the prospects of electrical injury through education and awareness. The publication includes information on wiring design and protection, wiring methods, equipment and installations, hazardous locations, and special systems. Technical provisions of the standard are explained in clear, easy-to-read terms.

Copies of the guide, stock number 029-015-00064-3, are available for \$5.50 (prepaid) from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Dept. 36-CV, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Work-Related Disease Can Be Eradicated, New CDC Chief Says

U.S. workplaces should be free of injuries and diseases, and doctors and scientists should view the top 10 occupational safety and health problems as eradicable, according to Dr. James Mason, the newly installed director of the Centers for Disease Control.

Both NIOSH and CDC should work toward abolishing work-related afflictions such as neurotoxic illness and occupational cancer, Mason said. "It is our theme, it is our keystone, it is our duty, it is our responsibility," he stated. He recalled that CDC was established to eradicate malaria because of the effect the disease had on military personnel. The same pattern of identification, control, and elimination should be used when approaching occupational diseases, Mason said.

NIOSH and CDC should work together to eradicate the 10 leading occupational health and safety problems, Mason said. These include: occupational lung disease; musculoskeletal injuries; occupational cancer; fractures, amputations, eye losses and

001251

traumatic deaths; cardiovascular disease; reproductive problems; neurotoxic illness; noise-induced hearing loss; dermatological problems; and psychological disorders.

Appeals Court Stays OSHA's Asbestos ETS

The Asbestos Information Association's request for a stay of OSHA's emergency temporary standard on asbestos exposure has been granted by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth District. The ruling prevents OSHA from lowering the permissible exposure limit for asbestos to 0.5 fibers per cubic centimeter, pending further order of the court.

The AIA filed suit after OSHA head Thorne Auchter denied a request for administrative stay. Auchter said that the detrimental effects the ETS would have on the industry could not counterbalance the importance of protecting worker health. The AIA, however, charged that OSHA's risk assessment contained errors in calculating the number of lives that would be saved by an ETS. OSHA spokesmen, meanwhile, say they are confident that the court will rule in the agency's favor after its review.

More Than 175,000 Inspections Conducted in FY 1983

Federal and state job safety and health officials conducted a combined total of 175,236 workplace inspections during fiscal year 1983, the Labor Department has announced. Federal inspectors visited 68,577 worksites during the year -- the highest total in seven years and 8 percent more than in FY 1980, the previous recent high. The 24 states and territories operating their own safety and health programs inspected 106,659 workplaces -- more than 60 percent of the FY 1983 total.

OSHA chief Thorne Auchter, comparing FY 1983 data with those for FY 1980, the last full year of the previous administration, also reported that federal OSHA's general schedule or targeted inspections increased by 77 percent to 59,113, while investigations resulting from accidents were down 37 percent to 1,440. Follow-up inspections, which were found to be non-productive because 99 percent show hazards have been abated, were reduced 86 percent, OSHA announced. The agency said the time saved by curtailing follow-ups is equivalent to the worktime of 68 additional inspectors.

Auchter also said that federal inspections in construction, a high-hazard industry, increased 28 percent, to 33,862. The lost workday case rate dropped from 6.5 per 100 workers in calendar 1980 to 6.0 in 1982. In manufacturing, the rate dropped from 5.2 to 4.3.

Dioxin Exposure Should Be Minimal, NIOSH Official Says

Scientists are not sure what a safe level is for dioxin exposure, and so occupational exposure should be kept at the lowest level possible through the use of engineering controls, decontamination procedures, and personal protective equipment, according to Richard Lemen, director of the division of standards development and technology transfer for NIOSH.

Lemen said a guidance manual for controlling worker exposure to dioxin is being prepared and should be published in the very near future. More research is needed on the relationship between the substance and cancer rates, Lemen said.

001252



National Safety Council 444 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611

Printed in U.S.A.

Product No. 099.41 OSHA