

Executive Safety Update

The Monthly News Bulletin of the Construction Safety Center

Vol. 17, Issue 9 – April/May 2010

OSHA program protects federal workers

Hazardous federal worksites are the focus of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Federal Agency Targeting Inspection Program 2010 ([FEDTARG10](#)). The nationwide program emphasizes workplace safety and health for federal workers and contractors supervised by federal personnel.

FEDTARG10 focused on the most dangerous federal agency workplaces that experienced high numbers of lost time injuries during fiscal 2009. Field inspectors conducted 59 inspections of high hazard federal worksites and found 336 violations of OSHA safety and health standards. The top three standards cited were electrical, respiratory protection and hazard communications. The 336 violations cited were more than twice the number cited in 2008, indicating the necessity for the FEDTARG program.

"The right to safe and healthful working conditions is not limited to private industry workers," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA David Michaels. "Workplace safety also extends to those working for the federal government. Continuing the targeting of federal workplaces assures consistent workplace safety standards in federal and private sectors."

This program began in 2008 in response to a Government Accountability Office audit report that recommended the agency develop a targeted inspection program for federal worksites.

OSHA's Office of Federal Agency Programs (FAP) represents the federal sector regarding occupational safety and health issues. The FAP provides federal agencies with guidance for implementing effective occupational safety and health programs.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

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Editor in Chief: Tom Broderick
Managing Editor: Gayla Bockrath
Technical Team: Jack Kozina

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US Department of Labor focuses on safety of workers as oil cleanup activities ramp up in Gulf Coast region OSHA's assistant secretary visits area to offer expertise, assistance

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels is in Louisiana today with a team of experienced hazardous materials professionals leading an effort to ensure that oil spill cleanup workers receive necessary protections from the hazards of this work.

Cleanup workers can face potential hazards from oil byproducts, dispersants, detergents and degreasers. Drowning, heat illness and falls also pose hazards, as can encounters with insects, snakes and other wild species native to the impacted areas. OSHA is consulting with BP, as well as federal agency partners, to ensure that workers receive appropriate training and protective equipment.

"Oil spill cleanup workers are on the front lines attacking this disaster," said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "It is our top priority to ensure that this is done as effectively, efficiently and safely as possible."

In addition to meeting with OSHA staff and BP officials, Michaels is engaging with the Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and Louisiana state officials. OSHA staff have been on the ground in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi to evaluate the training and protections that will be put into place for workers.

"Our job is to work proactively so that measures are taken to ensure the safety of cleanup workers," said Michaels. "OSHA will monitor training, observe clean-up efforts and provide whatever assistance is needed to BP and its contractors."

OSHA is distributing guides for cleanup workers and developing those guides in Vietnamese and Spanish. OSHA also has established a website to provide hazard awareness material for all involved in the cleanup activities. The website will be updated with new information as the situation warrants. For information from OSHA on worker safety guidelines during the oil spill cleanup, visit <http://www.osha.gov/oilspills/index.html>.

OSHA will apply the lessons it learned during its experience in the cleanup of the Exxon Valdez spill as well as post-Hurricane Katrina cleanup efforts.

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US Department of Labor's OSHA holds series of stakeholder meetings on worker Injury and Illness Prevention Programs

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration will use comments from a series of stakeholder meetings to help develop a proposed rule for Injury and Illness Prevention Programs.

The rule will require employers to develop and implement a program that minimizes worker exposure to safety and health hazards. Instead of waiting for an OSHA inspection or a workplace incident to address workplace hazards, employers would be required to create a plan for identifying and correcting hazards, and then implement the plan. Workers would also participate in the development and implementation of such plans.

"We are asking employers to 'find and fix' the hazards in their workplaces," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. "This common sense rule will help make the secretary of labor's vision of 'Good Jobs for Everyone' a reality."

More information on Injury and Illness Prevention Programs is available in today's *Federal Register* notice at <http://s.dol.gov/35>.

The meetings will be held June 3 in East Brunswick, N.J., June 10 in Dallas, Texas, and June 29 in Washington, D.C. All meetings will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. local time.

Those interested in participating in the meetings should submit a notice of intent to participate at <https://www2.ergweb.com/projects/conferences/osha/register-osha-I2P2.htm>. Submissions also can be mailed to Eastern Research Group Inc., 110 Hartwell Ave., Lexington, MA 02421; Attention: OSHA Injury and Illness Prevention Programs Stakeholder Meeting Registration. Or fax submissions to 781-674-2906 begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 781-674-2906 end_of_the_skype_highlighting labeled "Attention: OSHA Injury and Illness Prevention Programs Stakeholder Meeting Registration."

Submission deadlines for confirmed registration are May 20 for the June 3 meeting, May 27 for the June 10 meeting and June 15 for the June 29 meeting. After these deadlines, registration will remain open until the meetings are full.

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