

## **NIOSH Encourages Disaster Recovery Personnel to Take Precautions**

As a result of the recent interstate highway bridge collapse in Minneapolis, MN, NIOSH has posted



In the event of a disaster, NIOSH stresses that emergency response personnel should exercise the utmost caution during the recovery process.

an update that reiterates the danger of rescue and recovery operations, and highlights the risks for physical injuries, infection and other health and safety concerns during disasters and emergency response efforts. According to NIOSH, strategic measures to manage hazards at rescue and recovery sites include:

- identification and management of potential hazards from debris and unstable work surfaces, noise, heat stress, chemical exposures and other possible hazards existing at the emergency site;
- development of a site safety checklist that assigns responsibilities for safety management and describes needed safety and health duties;
- designation of a field team leader and development of a checklist to help that person oversee preparation, training and deployment of volunteers, notify the site safety officer, and enforce the buddy system and site control.
- development of a work plan for operations, and periodic review and updating of the plan as more information about site conditions is obtained.

For more information and resources from NIOSH, visit [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/natural.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/natural.html).

## **Drug-Free Work Week Slated for October**

The National Drug-Free Work Week 2007 is scheduled for Oct. 14-20. Department of Labor (DOL), sponsor of the week, encourages employer and worker participation to demonstrate the fact that being drug free is key to protecting workplace safety and health. DOL offers these suggestions for ways to get involved:

- Implement and promote a drug-free workplace program. Whether or not your organization has such a program in place, creating one or updating an existing program will help ensure a safer work environment.
- Train supervisors and educate workers. Hold training sessions to ensure that supervisors understand the drug and alcohol use policies and how to refer employees to assistance. Companies also can educate their workers and provide information on the nature of alcohol and drug abuse.
- Offer health screenings and publicize treatment resources. Encourage employees to assess their personal use of alcohol and drugs. On-site employee or member assistance programs offer confidential services, and informing employees about local health facilities is another resource.

For more information, visit [www.dol.gov/asp/programs/drugs/workingpartners/dfww-introduction.asp](http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/drugs/workingpartners/dfww-introduction.asp).

## **CSB Releases Safety Video on Reactive Hazards**

To increase awareness of the dangers of reactive hazards, the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) has released a new safety video that warns about the dangers of these uncontrolled chemical reactions. The video, *Reactive Hazards: Dangers of Uncontrolled Chemical Reactions*, features computer animations of four major reactive chemistry accidents that CSB investigated: the Synthron accident in Morganton, NC, on Jan. 31, 2007; MFG Chemical Inc. in Dalton, GA, on April 12, 2004; BP Amoco in Augusta, GA, on March 23, 2005; and First Chemical Co. in Pascagoula, MS, on Oct. 13, 2002.

The video also refers to the Bhopal reactive chemical accident in 1984, which killed thousands of people. In addition, the video includes preventive guidance from Dennis Hendershot, a chemical industry process safety consultant, and Daniel Crowl, professor of chemical engineering at Michigan Technological University. The video may be viewed or ordered for free at [www.csb.gov](http://www.csb.gov).

## **U.S. Implements New International Health Regulations**

The U.S., along with other member states of the World Health Organization (WHO), has recently enforced the revised International Health Regulations (IHR), which were adopted in May 2005. WHO states that countries have 2 years to assess their capacity and develop national action plans for possible health threats, followed by 3 additional years to meet requirements of IHR regarding national surveillance and response systems, as well as requirements at airports, ports and ground crossings.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the updated rules are designed to prevent and protect against the international threat and spread of diseases while minimizing interference with travel and trade.

The previous version of IHR included only cholera, yellow fever, smallpox and plague. Advances in technology, transportation and communication have led to emerging and reemerging developments of infectious diseases. Under the revised IHR, member states must report outbreaks of smallpox, polio, new strains of human influenza, severe acute respiratory syndrome and, in some cases, outbreaks of cholera, yellow fever, West Nile fever or pneumonic plague. To view the IHR, visit [www.who.int/csr/ihr/en](http://www.who.int/csr/ihr/en).



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