



A Little About OSHA

By Lou Lento, CSA, OSHA (Hasbrouck Heights)

What do you know about OSHA? Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. The United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), has as its role, assuring the safety & health of America's workforce by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing alliances and partnerships; and encouraging continual process improvement in workplace safety & health.

The Occupational Safety & Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act) created OSHA to help employers and employees reduce injuries, illness and deaths on the job in America. Since then, workplace fatalities have been reduced by more than 60 percent and occupational injury and illness rates have declined 40 percent. At the same time, U.S. employment has more than doubled and now includes over 115 million employees at 7.2 million worksites.

When employees stay whole and healthy, businesses also benefit. They experience:

- lower workers' compensation insurance costs
- reduced medical expenditures
- decreased payout for return to work programs
- improved morale and product quality
- lower costs for accommodating injured employees
- increased productivity
- lower costs for training replacement workers
- decreased costs for overtime

Each year in America, over 5000 workers die from workplace injuries in the private sector alone. On average, **SIXTEEN** workers per day do not return to their families at the end of the workday. Another 50,000 employees die from illnesses in which workplace exposures were a contributing factor. Nearly 4.3 million people suffer non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses, costing over **156 billion dollars** annually.

OSHA uses **three basic strategies**, authorized by the OSH Act to help employers and employees reduce injuries, illness and fatalities on the job:

- Strong, fair and effective enforcement;
- Outreach, education, and compliance assistance;
- Partnerships, Alliances and other cooperative programs.

With regards to enforcement, OSHA has four inspection priorities:

1. Imminent danger – a situation that may cause death or serious harm to the exposed employee;
2. Catastrophes & fatal accidents – death or the hospitalization of 3 or more employees must be reported to OSHA within 8 hours;
3. Complaints & referrals – formal employee complaints, referrals from other agencies regarding employees exposed to imminent danger or other safety / health hazards;
4. Programmed inspections – aimed at specific high hazard industries.

Employees have basic rights under the OSH Act:

- To notify their employer or OSHA about workplace hazards. Employees may ask that OSHA keep names confidential;
- To request an OSHA inspection of alleged unsafe or unhealthful conditions in the workplace. Employees or their representative may participate in the inspection;
- To file a complaint with OSHA within 30 days of retaliation or discrimination by their employer for making safety & health complaints or for exercising any rights under the OSH Act;
- To see OSHA citations issued to their employer. Employers must post the citations at or near the place of the alleged violations;

On the other hand, employees must comply with all occupational safety & health standards issued under the OSH Act that apply to their actions and conduct on the job.

To further mission accomplishment, OSHA employs the extensive use of outreach, education & training and compliance assistance. OSHA's website, www.osha.gov, provides information on the agency as well as the safety & health standards, interpretations, directives, electronic assistance tools, specific training programs and information on Young Worker safety & health.

Each of the four area offices in New Jersey has on staff a Compliance Assistance Specialist (CAS). Their function is to respond to assistance requests from employers, unions, trade associations, community and faith based groups. In addition, the CAS may arrange for training, speak at various events and provide safety and health awareness training for Young Workers.

OSHA's cooperative programs such as Alliances, Partnerships, Consultation and the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) enable organizations committed to workplace safety & health to collaborate with OSHA to prevent injuries, illness and death on the job.

OSHA has had an Alliance with the Partnership for a Drug Free NJ since October 25th, 2004. In 2003 a national survey indicated that 77% of adults with drug and alcohol problems were employed. OSHA contacted the Partnership to discuss the possibility of forming an Alliance.

The OSHA / Partnership for a Drug Free NJ Alliance provides NJ employers with information, guidance and access to training resources that will assist in reducing the number of workplace accidents, injuries and fatalities caused by the use and abuse of alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription and over the counter drugs.

OSHA outreach materials include information about the Partnership and its resources. Each quarter, the OSHA Northern NJ Federal Safety and Health Council invites the Partnership to set up an informational display table. Conversely the Partnership invites OSHA to their seminars to distribute literature and network with employers.

Recently the Partnership was invited to join the BuildSafeNJ organization, of which OSHA is a member. The mission of BuildSafeNJ is to work together, advancing safety excellence in the NJ construction industry, protecting workers and the community. This voluntary association represents a diverse group of professionals from unions, general contractors, subcontractors, insurance companies, OSHA and business leaders. The Partnership will bring additional resources to the group.

We trust the readers of this article will reach out to OSHA and assist us in promoting worker safety and health. Below you will find our list of important phone numbers and websites. For information, and an application to join our NJ Federal Safety & Health Council contact Lou Lento at lento.lou@dol.gov, or at the Hasbrouck Heights Area OSHA Office listed below.

USDOL – OSHA NJ AREA OFFICES

Parsippany Area Office
 Counties: Essex, Hudson, Morris and Sussex
 Phil Peist, Area Director
 U.S. Department of Labor – OSHA
 299 Cherry Hill Rd. - Suite 103 - Parsippany, NJ
 07054
 Ph: 973.263.1003 Fax: 973.263.5502
 Bob Garvey, Compliance Assistance Specialist (CAS)

Hasbrouck Heights Area Office
 Counties: Bergen and Passaic
 Michael Silva, Acting Area Director
 U.S. Department of Labor – OSHA
 500 Rt. 17 South – 2nd Fl. – Hasbrouck Heights, NJ
 07604
 Ph: 201.288.1700 Fax: 201.288.7315
 Lou Lento, Compliance Assistance Specialist (CAS)

Avenel Area Office
 Counties: Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset, Union,
 Warren & Staten Island
 Lisa Levy, Area Director
 U.S. Department of Labor – OSHA
 1030 St. Georges Ave. - Plaza 35 – Suite 205 –
 Avenel, NJ 07001
 Ph: 732.750.3270 Fax: 732.750.4737
 Mike Yarnell, Compliance Assistance Specialist
 (CAS)

Marlton Area Office
 Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May,
 Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean
 and Salem Counties
 Gary Roskoski, Area Director
 U.S. Department of Labor – OSHA
 701 Route 73 South – Bldg. 2, Suite 120 – Marlton,
 NJ 08053
 Ph: 856.396.2594 Fax: 856.396.2593
 Martin Davis, Compliance Assistance Specialist
 (CAS)

Important Phone Numbers & Websites (as of 7-22-08)

- USDOL-OSHA
 Phone: 1-800-321-OSHA /
<http://www.osha.gov>
- National Institute for Safety and Health
 (NIOSH) –
 Phone: 800.356.4674 /
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/>
- USDOL-OSHA Voluntary Protection
 Program (VPP) Region 2
 VPP Program Mgr. – Mike Levy Phone:
 518.464.6742 x 228
- Atlantic OSHA Training Center – Region 2,
 as part of the UMDNJ Office of Public
 Health Practice, Centers for Education and
 Training
 Phone: 732.235.9450
 Website: <http://sph.umdj.edu>
- NJ Department of Labor & Workforce
 Development (LWD)
 Phone: 1-800-397-3346
- NJ Cooperative Education Coordinators
 Association (NJCECA)
 - Northern NJ group contact,
njceca@njceca.org (Steve Miller)
 - NJ Cooperative Education and
 Internship Association,
<http://www.njceia.org/>
- Website: <http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/lsse>
- NJ Department of Health & Senior Services
 (DHSS)
 Phone: 609.984.1863
 Websites: <http://www.nj.gov/health> ,
<http://www.nj.gov/health/eoh/peoshweb/>
- NJ Governor's Occupational Safety &
 Health Awards Program
 Phone: 609.984.4738
 Website:
<http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/forms>
- Prevent Blindness Tri-State –
 Phone: 800.850.2020 /
<http://www.preventblindness.org/tristate/>
- NJ State Safety Council –
 Phone: 800.228.3834 /
<http://www.njsafety.org>
- Work Environment Council (WEC) –
 Phone: 609.695.7100 /
<http://www.njwec.org/>
 - NJ Violence Prevention Initiative
http://www.spannj.org/pirc/violence_prevention_initiative.htm
 NJ Cooperative Education
 Association (NJCEA)
 Southern NJ group contact,
jhillard@pemb.org (John Hillard)
<http://www.njcea.com/>

Important Upcoming Dates

- Oct. 7th & 8th, 2008- Northern NJ Facilities Expo –
(for info: www.facilitiesexpo.com)
Location: NJ Convention and Expo Center, Edison, NJ
showcases a wide array of products and services to help buildings and facilities operate safely, efficiently, and cost-effectively
- Health Care Convention & Expo - October 28th, 29th & 30th, 2008
(for info: www.hcanj.org)
Location: Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ
Annual Showcase for the entire health care profession in NJ

Lou Lento is Compliance Assistance Specialist for the Hasbrouck Heights area OSHA office in Hasbrouck Heights, NJ. He has partnered with the “Drugs Don’t Work in NJ!” program several times in maintaining drug-free workplaces for safety reasons, and can be reached at the Hasbrouck Heights OSHA office, listed above.

Notice: This article reflects the opinion of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey (PDFNJ). This information should not be construed as legal advice from the author or PDFNJ. Please consult your own attorney before making any legal decisions.

*Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey
155 Millburn Ave, Millburn, NJ 07041*

973-467-2100 Fax. 973-467-2188 www.drugfreenj.org

***Do you know a high school student
whose life is music?
Do you know how drugs destroy lives?***

No matter what kind of music they’re into if they’ve got a positive message about staying drug free, tell them to SHOUT IT OUT and be a part of the 2009 NJ Shouts Down Drugs High School music competition!

Contest finalists will perform their original music at the 2009 Statewide Prevention Concert at the NJ Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), Newark, on May 6, 2009. Over \$10,000 in prizes will be awarded and winners will have their songs professionally recorded!

Log onto www.drugfreenj.org to get entry info!

Deadline for entries: January 8, 2009

