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Safe Approaches to Nanotechnology: An Information Exchange with NIOSH

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Nanotechnology has been described as one of the fastest growing technological areas in history and has the potential to revolutionize global industry by changing and improving products in many sectors. As with any new technology, there are a number of unknowns which generate awareness and concern in the occupational safety and health community. The National Institute for Safety and Health (NIOSH) has played a leading role in conducting research on the potential implications and applications of nanotechnology on workplace safety and health, and is committed to ensuring worker protection as this technology evolves. NIOSH has developed and posted on its web site the document Approaches to Safe Nanotechnology: An Information Exchange with NIOSH to raise awareness of potential safety and health concerns from exposure to nanomaterials. A key feature of this document is the ability for readers to provide feedback to NIOSH in the form of comments, recommendations, and case studies in response to the initial guidance being offered. The broad scope, diversity, and rapid developments in nanotechnology make it impossible to offer definitive guidelines or practices that will apply to all situations. However, the NIOSH document will provide a vehicle for more rapid sharing of results from NIOSH studies; a means to share lessons from the OS&H community; and a more effective process for translating findings from field and research studies into practices that can be applied. The document presents information that is the Institutes current knowledge and opinion. As the knowledge base on nanotechnology grows, NIOSH intends to provide updates on the guidance for the safe handling of nanoparticles and other safe approaches to nanotechnology. Safe Approaches to Nanotechnology: An Information Exchange with NIOSH can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/nanotech/nano_exchange.html.

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