Incorporating occupational safety and health in vocational-technical education: A perspective from the USA

Author Palassis, John
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA

Co-Author (s)

Problem under study

Injury statistics indicate that in any given year the injury rate of young workers is three times the rate of all workers. NIOSH estimates that 200.000 young workers at 18 years or under suffer work-related injuries each year and 64.000 require treatment in hospital emergency rooms. Tragically, 70 of them die. More than half of the injured adolescents reported that they had not received any training in how to prevent the injury they sustained. There are more than 11 million students that attend 20.000 vocational/ technical schools programmes in the U.S., and most of them are employed after school hours, holidays and Summer.

Objectives

NIOSH efforts to incorporate Occupational Safety and Health (OS&H) in the voc-tech education are designed to (1) increase the safety and health awareness and education of the vocational school teachers and administrators, so that information can be passed on to the students during vocational training and prior to entering the work environment; (2) to produce informed students capable of recognizing, controlling, and remediation vocational safety and health hazards, applying safe work practices, and consequently becoming safer future workers.

Methodology

NIOSH OS&H incorporation efforts are accomplished with partnering organizations which: (1) develop, and evaluate safety and health programmes and curriculum materials and student learning activities, including intervention and prevention programs for injury and illness in vocational schools; (2) collaborate with vocational organizations, associations, and agencies to develop, endorse, promote, and support national safety and health programmes, curricula, and guidelines for all voc-tech schools.

Results

NIOSH developed a series of products targeted to voc-tech education, e.g., Alerts in booklets to inform young workers-students, educators, employers, and parents about preventing deaths, injuries, and illnesses in the workplace. A Safety Checklist Programme based on 82 checklists was produced in CD-ROM to establish a safety coordinator and a safety committee for hazard recognition and control in voc-tech schools to comply with regulatory safety and health regulations. A Core Curriculum in Occupational Safety and Health (OS&H) has been developed to serve as an example of what core topics regarding safety and health should be included in school curricula. The Career Clusters initiative builds foundational cross-cutting skills in occupational safety and health for all the 16 Clusters in voc-tech education. NIOSH collaborates with the National Association of State Directors for Career and Technical Education consortium to develop these skills. A Student Manual for Electrical Safety was produced as a prototype and was distributed to thousands of schools and apprenticeship programmes, was well received. NIOSH co-sponsors national competitions and awards among teachers for OS&H papers and students' OS&H projects in voc-tech schools. NIOSH is involved with the National Skill Standard Board and its Voluntary Partnerships to develop National Skill Standards and include OS&H competencies. The completed skill standards are for the Manufacturing, Sales and Service, Education and Training, Information Communication and Technology sectors of the U.S. economy. The national skill standards are for workers and employers.

Conclusion

NIOSH in collaboration with its partnering organizations is incorporating OS&H into the school programmes

and curricula. Some evaluation has been performed and evaluation efforts are continuing. Close monitoring of injury statistics of young workers over the period of next 10+ years will also indicate the efficacy and impact of these efforts.

Risks in the Work Environment

Moderator: George Conway

08:30   Palassis, John
**Incorporating occupational safety and health
in vocational-technical education:
a perspective from the USA**
National Institute for Occupational Safety and
Health (NIOSH)/Centers for Disease
USA

08:45   Lang, Robert
**Towards the systematic implementation of occupational
health and safety in vocational training in Switzerland**
Suva
Switzerland

09:00   Lackinger, Roland
**Workplace safety and safety techniques
within the Austrian Armed Forces – philosophy
and realization strategy**
Federal Ministry for Defense
Austria

09:15   Purschwitz, Mark
**Creating a safer and healthier agriculture:
are we asking the right questions**
National Farm Medicine Center
USA

09:30   Williamson, Ann
**What can a tingle tell us about making workplaces safer?
The causes of electric shock incidents in mining**
NSW Injury Risk Management Research Centre
Australia

09:45   Coggan, Carolyn
**Evaluation of a workplace alcohol and drugs programme:
Not at work**
University of Auckland
New Zealand

Road Safety
Child Safety
Violence Prevention
Work Safety and Health
Trauma, Disaster,
Civil Protection, Terrorism
Sports, Leisure Safety
Suicide Prevention
Elder Safety
Home & Institutional Safety
Product Safety
Cross-Sectoral

08:00
08:30
09:00
09:30
10:00
10:30
11:00
11:30
12:00
12:30
13:00
13:30
14:00
14:30
15:00
15:30
16:00
16:30
17:00
17:30
18:00
18:30

Wednesday, June 9th, 2004