

From the Director's Desk



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From the Director's Desk

Ensuring that our programs are relevant and have real impact in the workplace is paramount to NIOSH. At the same time, as a scientifically robust organization, we are faced every day with professional and administrative challenges. We have a diverse program of research across many different disciplines. Our scientists and engineers work in several geographically dispersed locations, impeding their ability to network closely with each other.

To meet those challenges by better coordinating our efforts, we have organized our portfolio into various specific categories that can be readily communicated and strategically governed and evaluated. The NIOSH Program Portfolio focuses on relevance, quality and impact. It relies heavily on your strong involvement, our partners and stakeholders, throughout the entire research continuum.

The NIOSH Program Portfolio has been organized into eight sector programs under the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) that represent different industrial sector groupings, and into fifteen cross-sector programs organized around adverse health outcomes, statutory programs and global efforts. In addition, NIOSH is organizing seven coordinated emphasis areas that support the sector and cross-sector programs. You can view the list of the 30 Programs at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pgmptfolio.html>

The Program Portfolio will ensure that all NIOSH programs are coordinated with NORA and will unite researchers across NIOSH laboratories in seven states. The Portfolio of 30 interdependent programs

addresses a common set of data-driven, stakeholder-involved, expert-informed, prioritized goals. Evaluation is crucial, so we have embedded performance criteria throughout the process. The programs are internally peer-reviewed and externally monitored by an independent process overseen by the National Academies.

NIOSH is currently assigning Managers and Coordinators to each of the 30 Program Portfolio categories. In time, research councils for the NORA sector programs and steering committees for the cross-sector programs and coordinated emphasis areas will be formed. We will need our stakeholders and partners to become involved with these councils and committees to plan efforts leading to output and outcome goals and a timeline for assessing performance.

Please watch the Program Portfolio topic page, on the link provided above, for additional information. In the next few weeks, we will be adding much more information to the page, providing further details and resources for each program category. We hope that this expansion will help you to stay better informed about our research strategies, and we hope it will stimulate your interest in becoming part of our planning process.

Public Invited to Comment on Construction Strategic Goals and Performance Measures

The NIOSH Construction program has developed draft strategic goals and performance measures to guide future NIOSH construction activities. You may view these items on the Construction program topic page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/construction>. We encourage you to read these goals and measures and send comments and feedback to the NIOSH Construction Coordinator Matt Gillen at niosh-construction@cdc.gov.

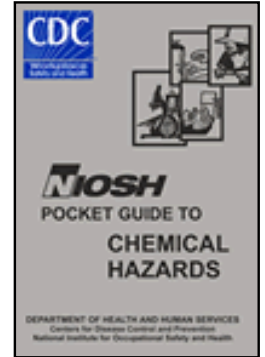
You are also invited to share your ideas for future research in construction at the upcoming NORA town hall meeting in Chicago, IL on December 19. The afternoon session will focus specifically on the NIOSH Construction Program. Participants are also invited to share comments during the general morning session. More details on the location of this and other upcoming town halls meetings can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/townhall>.

NIOSH Staff Make Significant Contributions in Protecting Hurricane Recovery and Relief Workers

About 100 NIOSH scientists and engineers were involved in Hurricane Katrina response activities. Their efforts focused on immediate needs but opened many doors for sustainable partnerships. NIOSH staff provided leadership on response worker-safety and other occupational safety and health issues in the CDC Director's Emergency Operations Center in Atlanta. As a part of CDC's assistance efforts in the field, NIOSH also supported federal interagency coordination efforts in Baton Rouge on occupational safety and health, provided guidance to officials in the state of Louisiana and the City of New Orleans, and assessed health and safety at worksites in New Orleans and in shelters in Texas. Additionally, NIOSH scientists produced new, web-based interim documents on many issues critical for the Katrina response, including debris burning, ventilation system clean-up, health surveillance of workers, and mold exposures. The largest effort in terms of staffing occurred in New Orleans, where NIOSH worked in tandem with its other CDC colleagues through the CDC response effort. NIOSH teams of industrial hygienists, medical officers, and engineers conducted outreach and provided health and safety guidance to minority workers (Hispanic and Vietnamese), assessed occupational illness and injury surveillance efforts, and conducted environmental assessments of worksites including sampling for metals, asbestos, particulate matter, respirable silica, and noise. In addition, they designed and carried out a survey of illness, injury, and workplace stress in the New Orleans Police Department and began planning a similar evaluation for the New Orleans Fire Department. Although the acute phase of the hurricane response has largely ended, NIOSH staff remain involved in ongoing Katrina-related issues. Moreover, they are engaged in post-response evaluations to strengthen future emergency responses.

Silver Edition of the NIOSH Pocket Guide

NIOSH has released a new edition of the *NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards*. The new edition is available as a printed book (DHHS NIOSH Publication No. 2005-149), and as a CD-ROM (DHHS NIOSH Publication No. 2005-151) and online at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/>. One of the main changes for this new edition of the Pocket Guide, which has a silver cover, is that particulate respirator recommendations have been updated. Also, the layout of the paper version has been changed substantially to make the book easier to read and use. In addition, the web version is now searchable. The Pocket Guide contains important safety and health information for 677 chemicals that are encountered in the workplace. It was first published in 1978 and has been revised and updated regularly since then. In addition to the Pocket Guide, the CD-ROM also contains several other databases, such as the 2004 Emergency Response Guidebook, NIOSH and OSHA analytical methods, and the International Chemical Safety Cards. Both the paper version and CD-ROM are available from the NIOSH publications office by calling 1-800-35-NIOSH.



Estimating the Global Burden of Disease and Injury Due to Occupational Risk Factors

The December 2005 Special Issue of the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* is dedicated to “The Contribution of Occupational Risk Factors to the Global Burden of Disease.” The work was carried out as part of a World Health Organization (WHO) Comparative Risk Assessment analysis of 26 risk factors to the global burden of disease. The methodologic requirements limited the risk factors that could be studied globally, so that the individual articles account for about 800,000 of the estimated 2 million deaths that occur annually due to occupational risks. Individual articles include addressing the global burden due to occupational carcinogens, airborne particulates, noise, ergonomic risks for back pain, and risk for traumatic injury; estimating the global burden of infectious disease due to sharps injuries among healthcare workers; and examining previous published estimates of global burden due to occupational risks. Three articles focus on economic issues: cost effectiveness of workplace interventions to prevent silicosis and back pain, and an economic model used at company level to evaluate the net costs involved in prevention of occupational back pain. Abstracts from articles in this Special Issue can be found at <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jhome/34471>.

NIOSH Seeks Public Comment on Draft Current Intelligence Bulletin

NIOSH is requesting public comment on the draft Current Intelligence Bulletin, “Evaluation of Health Hazard and Recommendations for Occupational Exposure to Titanium Dioxide.” The draft document is posted on the NIOSH Web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/preprint/tio2> for public comment by March 31, 2006.

The draft document includes the following findings and recommendations on which NIOSH is seeking comments:

- A recommended exposure limit of 1.5 milligrams per cubic meter for fine TiO₂ and 0.1 milligrams per cubic meter for ultrafine particles as time-weighted averages for up to 10 hours per day during a 40-hour work week.
- Differences in recommended limits for fine and ultrafine particles reflect findings from studies which suggest that ultrafine TiO₂ particles may be more potent than fine TiO₂ particles at the same mass.
- Recommended exposure limits would control occupational exposures to levels that are unlikely to raise a risk of work-related lung cancer. With this recommendation, NIOSH would remove its current classification as an occupational carcinogen.

- Further research is needed in the measurement of workplace airborne exposures to ultrafine TiO₂ in facilities that produce the material in order to better understand potential exposure risks.

Comments on the draft document may be submitted to titanium-dioxide-comments@cdc.gov or by using an online form available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/preprint/tio2/tio2cmnts.html>. NIOSH will hold a public meeting on the draft document on February 27, 2006. Details will be forthcoming in the Federal Register and eNews.

Information Resource to Facilitate Research on the Organization of Work

To facilitate research on health and safety issues related to the organization of work, a new NIOSH Web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/workorg/tools>, hosts a searchable database and resource lists of assessment methods for characterizing the organization of work. This information resource aims to enhance research in the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Organization of Work priority area by providing a means for researchers to quickly and easily identify available instruments for measuring organizational characteristics that may be useful for advancing research on the associations between work organization and worker safety, health, and well-being. Expansion of the database and resource list content is ongoing, and users and developers of work organization measures are encouraged to nominate instruments for consideration. Information about the instrument nomination process can be found on the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Web page.



NIOSH Signs MOU with Federal Fire Administration

NIOSH and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) signed a memorandum of understanding on November 21, 2005 to identify collaborative efforts the two agencies can undertake with the goal of improving safety and health conditions for fire fighters throughout the United States. The primary focus of the agreement involves fostering the use of findings and recommendations from the NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program in USFA fire fighter training materials and programs. More information about the NIOSH program can be found at: www.cdc.gov/niosh/firehome.html and more information about USFA training and education can be found at: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/training/nfa/>. The agreement was signed by NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D., and U.S. Fire Administrator R. David Paulison.

NIOSH DSHEFS Deputy Director Receives Gorgas Award

On November 2, Laurence Reed received the Gorgas Award at the Association of Medical Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS) annual awards meeting in Nashville, TN. Larry is the Deputy Director of the NIOSH Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations, and Field Studies (DSHEFS) and holds the rank of Captain in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. He was nominated for the award by Commissioned Corps Rear Admiral Robert Williams for his “outstanding and sustained leadership in occupational public health while serving with CDC/NIOSH”. The Gorgas Award is named after Major General William Crawford Gorgas, who played an instrumental public health role in the construction of the Panama Canal in the early 1900s by leading efforts to eradicate yellow fever in the Canal Zone. The Gorgas Medal recognizes individuals for distinguished work in preventive medicine, clinical application, education or research.

Upcoming Public Meeting to Focus on Respirator Standards

NIOSH will hold a public stakeholder meeting on December 13, 2005 at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel in Pittsburgh, PA. The meeting will address concepts for standards for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) closed-circuit, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), CBRN powered, air-purifying respirators (PAPR), and multi-function PAPRs. Additional information and the registration form is available on the NIOSH Web page at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/resources/pressrel/letters/ltr-121305.html>.

Upcoming Exhibits

Look for the NIOSH Exhibit Booth at these upcoming conferences:

- The *10th Annual Safety Seminar for Underground Stone Mines* December 6-7, 2005 at the Executive Inn in Louisville, KY. You can access the Seminar Registration and Schedule Flyer at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/calendar/2005StoneFlyer.pdf> or contact Lou Prosser at LProsser@cdc.gov for more information. For registration information, contact Kim Mitchell at KAMitchell@cdc.gov.
- The *10th Mine Health and Safety Seminar* January 18-19, 2006 at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Lehigh Valley, PA. More information can be found at <http://www.egee.psu.edu/safetysem10/index.html> or by contacting Mark Radomsky at mcr4@psu.edu.
- The *Northwest Mining Association's 111th Annual Meeting "Exploring the Modern Minerals Renaissance"* will be held December 5-9, 2005 in Spokane, WA. More information can be found at <http://nwma.org/convention.asp>.

r2p Corner

NIOSH conducts research to prevent illness and injury among workers. Good stewardship requires research we conduct to be highly relevant, high quality, and result in maximum impact. As a means of focusing our research on these drivers, NIOSH research now follows a process called Research-to-Practice (r2p). Conducting research under r2p utilizes partnerships to help address relevance and evaluation to help ensure quality. Partnerships are utilized in all phases of the research process (frequently with different partners in the different phases) for several reasons: ensuring relevant issues are being addressed; identifying all appropriate stakeholders; and translating results into a format that is most useful for stakeholders. The number of formal partnerships with NIOSH has doubled during the last year. Evaluation – again in all phases of the research process – is used to ensure that the highest quality research is being planned, conducted, translated and disseminated to stakeholders. The following link provides more information on r2p at NIOSH, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/r2p>.



r2p Research



NORA

NIOSH and its partners will be conducting public town hall meetings in Seattle and Houston in January to address regional and sector-specific needs in occupational safety and health research under the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA).



Meetings will address all issues during the morning session and sector-specific issues in the afternoon.

Details include:

Seattle, WA
Tuesday, January 17, 2006
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Pacific Time
Morning Session: Regional Issues
Afternoon Session: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing

Houston, TX
Monday, January 23, 2006
9:00 am – 5:00 pm Central Time
Morning Session: Regional Issues
Afternoon Session: Healthcare and Social Services

The public meetings are open to all. Participants will be asked to make five minute presentations describing top issues in workplace safety and health. Everyone is invited to speak, but presenters are asked to register to be added to the agenda. All testimony will be entered into the NORA Docket, and will be used by NORA Research Councils to help shape sector-specific and related cross-sector research agendas for the nation.

Please visit the NORA Town Hall meeting Web page <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/townhall>, to register for either the Seattle or Houston public meetings. If you cannot attend a meeting, we still need your input. You can submit your comments online at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora>. The site also contains information about additional town hall meetings that will be noted in future issues of eNews.

Around NIOSH

Division of Applied Research and Technology (DART)

NIOSH has partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Beryllium Health and Safety Committee (BHSC) to develop standard practices and test methods for beryllium in the workplace. This partnership has resulted in the development of several new American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International consensus standards, including standards for air sampling and analysis by atomic spectrometry, surface dust sampling, and a field-portable method for beryllium in the workplace using fluorescence detection. Recent progress in these areas was presented at the NIOSH-, DOE- and BHSC-cosponsored Symposium on the Detection of Beryllium Particles, which took place November 8-9 in Salt Lake City, UT. Further collaborations between researchers at Los Alamos National Laboratory and a small business in Tucson, AZ involve validation of the field-portable fluorescence method for beryllium. For more information on NIOSH research on beryllium sampling, analysis and standards, contact Kevin Ashley at KAshley@cdc.gov.

Division of Respiratory Disease Studies (DRDS)

On November 15, NIOSH staff met with ConAgra officials and their health and safety consultants to review progress in medical surveillance and engineering interventions designed to prevent potential lung disease in workers manufacturing microwave popcorn in their four plants. This work was motivated by a NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation in their Marion, OH plant which documented bronchiolitis obliterans cases among the mixers of butter flavoring with heated corn oil. NIOSH has documented cases of this rare and irreversible lung disease in five of six microwave popcorn plants studied. Work-related inhalation of butter flavorings is related to risk, and NIOSH's Health Effects Laboratory Division (HELD) has demonstrated that both butter flavoring and diacetyl, a principal component of butter flavorings, causes severe respiratory epithelium damage in rats at exposure levels similar to peak levels encountered by mixers in the industry.

The ConAgra efforts leverage NIOSH's intent that research on this emerging occupational lung disease, also present in the flavoring manufacturing industry, be put into practice to protect employees. NIOSH will partner with ConAgra to bring their experience, once completed, to benefit other companies with similar challenges. In the meantime, the open exchange during the meeting facilitates ongoing mutual interests in how serial spirometry can identify workers with subclinical disease, in appropriate clinical evaluation of workers with falling pulmonary functions, in the effectiveness of exhaust ventilation of flavoring sources, and in the relation between engineering controls and formulation of flavorings used in microwave popcorn. Staff from three NIOSH divisions contributed to the meeting: Division of Respiratory Disease Studies conducted the field investigations of microwave popcorn plants and prepared an Alert on flavorings; HELD staff has ongoing animal and in vitro model work; and Division of Applied Research and Technology staff have considered engineering controls in the industry.

Division of Safety Research (DSR)

In November, approval was granted by the Office of Management and Budget to proceed with an evaluation of the NIOSH Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program. The evaluation includes a nationwide survey of fire departments and a number of focus groups consisting of front-line fire fighters. The study will examine career and volunteer, large and small size, and urban and rural fire departments to determine the extent to which the program's reports, recommendations, and other products are being utilized by the fire service for training, policies, practices, and other prevention efforts. The evaluation will provide insight into the impact of the NIOSH program, which began in fiscal year 1998, and help to identify any enhancements that might further the program's impact. Data collection is scheduled to begin in early 2006. NIOSH is conducting the study in conjunction with RTI International.



Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations, and Field Studies (DSHEFS)

Pesticide-Related Illness and Injury Surveillance: a How-to Guide for State Based Programs (DHHS NIOSH

Publication No. 2006-102) provides information on how to develop and maintain surveillance programs for acute and subacute health effects from pesticide exposure. The complex nature of pesticide poisoning and the technical resources needed for surveillance and case investigation warranted the development of this manual. The primary target audience is state health departments with planned or established pesticide poisoning surveillance programs. Other target audiences include other federal, state, local, and international agencies, and members of the public interested in prevention of pesticide poisoning. In addition, many tools and techniques covered in this manual can be generalized for surveillance of other occupational and environmental injuries and illnesses. Development of the document was partially funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This publication can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-102/>. Additional information about acute occupational pesticide poisoning is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/pesticides/>.

Education and Information Division (EID)

You may have noticed a new look to the NIOSH home page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>. The home page, launched in September, was guided by usability studies conducted with NIOSH customers at the American Industrial Hygiene Conference & Exposition and the American Society of Safety Engineers Annual Conference. Participants interacted with a prototype of the NIOSH Web page and provided invaluable input that guided changes made to the NIOSH home page. The new NIOSH home page features a reduction in the number of links and graphics to ease navigation and keep the contents on one screen. In addition, tabs featuring the following categories of topic pages were added to facilitate browsing: (1) Industries & Occupations; (2) Hazards & Exposures; (3) Diseases & Injuries; (4) Chemicals, Safety & Prevention; and (5) Emergency Preparedness & Response. The revised navigation scheme also features 22 new topic pages for chemicals that users frequently requested information. Follow-up usability testing of the revised page was conducted at the National Safety Council Conference. Contact Glenn Doyle at GDoyle@cdc.gov for more information.

Health Effects Laboratory Division (HELD)

In October three researchers from Japan met with HELD researchers in Morgantown to discuss and lay groundwork for an international collaboration related to preventing vibration diseases and disorders. This is a significant partnership in that researchers hope it will lead to a new understanding of the nature and cause of diseases and disorders caused by vibration--whole body and arm/hand.

The three researchers that visited the facility were: Dr. Ando Hideo, Department of Environmental Medicine, Kurume University School of Medicine; Dr. Hosoya Naoki, Saitama University, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Production Science; and Dr. Setsuo Maeda, Senior Researcher Department of Human Engineering from the National Institute of Industrial Health, Japan. Dr. Maeda is a member of the International Standards Organization subcommittee on vibration, and in collaboration with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), results of this collaboration will have far-reaching impact on setting rational and appropriate standards for exposure to vibration and prevention of disease and injury in the workplace.

National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL)

The Technology Research Branch sponsored the *Advanced Personal Protective Equipment: Challenges in Protecting First Responders* Conference in October. The conference, held on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, was a resounding success. Approximately 150 participants attended workshops, including a workshop presented by staff members from NPPTL, entitled "What responders need to know about NIOSH-approved respirators." The Christiansburg, VA, Police Department presented "Incident Response to Terrorist Bombings." Exhibits and posters were also featured at this conference. The conference was designed to provide plenty of time for attendees, presenters, and exhibitors to interact; this format worked well.

NPPTL

Pittsburgh Research Laboratory (PRL)

To help management and employee trainers conduct quality on-the-job safety and health training, researchers at PRL developed a train-the-trainer package, "Coaching Skills for On-the-job Trainers." The package describes how to develop or manage an on-the-job training program so that information is passed on from the trainer/coach to the trainee efficiently and effectively. The package can be downloaded from the NIOSH Mining Web page at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/pubs/pdfs/2005-146.pdf>. For more information, contact Launa Mallett at LMallett@cdc.gov.



Spokane Research Laboratory (SRL)

NIOSH's *HazCom Helper - OSHA version* (DHHS NIOSH Publication No. 2005-135) provides individuals responsible for writing an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) hazard communication written program with software to aid in writing their program and identifying hazardous chemicals on site. The *HazCom Helper - OSHA version* can be downloaded from the NIOSH Web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/products/utilitysoftware.htm#HCHO>.

News From Our Partners

MIT to hold January "Particles and Cancer" Conference

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) will hold the "Particles and Cancer" conference January 10-11, 2006 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The program includes invited presentations on recent occupational and toxicology studies that have addressed potential links between particulates and cancer. Recent investigations of certain particles, including carbon black, talc and titanium dioxide, as well as environmental studies of particulates in which lung cancer is a major health outcome, will be addressed. The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and the American Board of Industrial Hygiene have approved the conference content for CME and CM credits, respectively. Abstracts for the conference will be accepted until December 5, 2006. More information can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/be/pc-conference>.

Communication Products

Two NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) Reports are now available.

Evaluation of Respiratory, Allergic, and Neuropsychological Complaints from Possible Mold Exposure **HHE**

NIOSH investigators responded to a request from elementary school employees to evaluate concerns about mold and possible health effects, including a question as to whether exposures might be associated with toxic encephalopathy. They found no evidence of significant mold contamination and no moisture in the walls, ceiling, or wood framing. They did not confirm the reports of toxic encephalopathy and could not conclusively link any reported symptoms directly to the school. NIOSH investigators recommended fixing minor ventilation deficiencies, implementing an indoor environmental quality management plan, and regular cleaning and dusting of classrooms. The full report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2005-0112-2980.pdf>.

Evaluation of Boating-related Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisonings **HHE**

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the National Park Service (NPS) requested assistance from NIOSH to evaluate potential boat-related exposures to carbon monoxide (CO) on Lake Powell, within Glen Canyon National Recreational Area in Arizona and Utah. DOI and NPS also asked for assistance in identifying boat-related CO poisonings. Investigators identified 176 boat-related acute CO poisonings between 1990 and 2004. Fourteen poisonings resulted in death due either to drowning or from CO intoxication, and 59 survivors lost consciousness during their exposure. NIOSH investigators measured lethal CO concentrations in and around boats. NIOSH investigators offered numerous recommendations to

develop effective prevention programs for reducing the number and severity of boat-related CO poisonings. The full report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2000-0400-2956.pdf>.

Upcoming Events

International Symposium: *Biomedical Aspects of Nano-Toxicology*

NIOSH will sponsor an international symposium, "Nano-Toxicology: Biomedical Aspects," on January 29-February 1, 2006, in Miami, FL. Invited speakers from the U.S. and abroad will address key issues for assessing the toxicology of nanomaterials and determining if such materials pose an occupational health risk. Other sponsoring organizations are the University of Pittsburgh, Inter Health Neutraceuticals, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Avanti Polar Lipids, Inc., Alabaster (USA). Additional details and a registration form are available at <http://www.pitt.edu/~nanotox/index.htm>.

IFISH 3

The *Third International Fishing Industry Safety and Health Conference (IFISH 3)* will be held on February 1-4, 2006 in Chennai, India. IFISH 3 is for those interested in small-scale and commercial fishing safety and injury prevention and will include a stimulating program with keynote speakers, presentation of scientific papers and posters and workshop. In addition, a thematic workshop on Tsunami will follow the conference on February 6-7, 2006. The conference is convened by the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Government Organization in collaboration with the NIOSH Alaska Field Station and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. More information on the conference can be found at <http://www.ifish3.org>.

Work, Stress and Health 2006: Making a Difference in the Workplace

NIOSH, the American Psychological Association, the National Institute of Justice of the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research of the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Labor, will convene the sixth international conference on occupational stress and health, *Work, Stress, and Health 2006: Making a Difference in the Workplace* in Miami, FL, March 2-4, 2006. The conference is designed to address the constantly changing nature of work, and the implications of these changes for the health, safety, and well-being of workers. In keeping with the conference theme of "making a difference in the workplace," there will be a particular focus on the translation of research to practice, and workplace programs, policies, practices, case experiences, and other efforts to prevent stress in today's workplace. More information about the conference can be found at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/work/wsh2006.html>.

Call for Abstracts: 13th International Respiratory Protection of Healthcare Workers and Emergency Responders

Abstracts are currently being accepted for the *13th International Respiratory Protection of Healthcare Workers and Emergency Responders Conference*. The conference will be held August 27-September 1, 2006 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Topics for papers include respiratory protection for healthcare workers, emergency responders, and those in developing countries, updates on standards and regulations, emerging hazards and technologies, and fundamentals of respiratory protection. The deadline for abstract submissions is March 31, 2006. More information on the Call for Abstracts is available at http://www.isrp.com.au/isrpcom/callforpapers_toronto.htm or by contacting Ziqing Zhuang at ZZhuang1@cdc.gov. Additional information on the conference can be found at <http://www.isrp.com.au>.

2006 NORA Symposium: Research Makes a Difference

The *National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Symposium 2006: Research Makes a Difference* symposium will be held on April 18-20, 2006 in Washington, DC. Several hundred occupational safety and health researchers, stakeholders, and policymakers from the public and private sectors will convene to

celebrate completion of the first decade of NORA, mark the 35th anniversary of NIOSH, and inaugurate the new plan for the future of NORA. An important aspect of this conference will be scientific presentations addressing the original 21 NORA priorities and anticipating research areas for the next 10 years. The symposium will be a unique forum for a broad cross-section of the occupational safety and health community to learn about the variety of research accomplishments stimulated or anticipated by NORA. For more information about the symposium, please visit the NORA Web page, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/NORA>, or e-mail the NORA coordinator at noracoordinator@cdc.gov.

Word of the Month

Titanium dioxide (TiO₂) is an insoluble white powder used in numerous commercial products including paint, cosmetics, plastics, paper and food. It is produced and used in the workplace in varying particle-size fractions, including fine and ultrafine sizes.

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