

## CDC Occupational Safety and Health

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is the U.S. federal agency that conducts research and makes recommendations to prevent worker injury and illness. This includes protecting those who serve (firefighters, energy workers and emergency responders), developing and supporting a new generation of researchers and practitioners and operating programs in every state to improve the health and safety of workers.

NIOSH produces new scientific knowledge and provides practical solutions vital to reducing risks of injury and death in traditional industries, such as agriculture, construction, and mining. NIOSH also supports research to predict, prevent, and address emerging problems that arise from dramatic changes in the 21st Century workplace and workforce. NIOSH partners with diverse stakeholders to study how worker injuries, illnesses, and deaths occur. NIOSH scientists design, conduct, and support targeted research, both inside and outside the institute, and support the training of occupational health and safety professionals to build capacity and meet increasing needs for a new generation of skilled practitioners. NIOSH and its partners support U.S. economic strength and growth by moving research into practice through concrete and practical solutions, recommendations, and interventions for the building of a healthy, safe and capable workforce.

### Protecting Those Who Serve

**Fire Fighters:** The United States depends on approximately 1.1 million career and volunteer fire fighters to protect its citizens and property from fire losses. Every year, about 100 U.S. fire fighters die in the line of duty. NIOSH investigates many of these incidents and develops recommendations to prevent similar fire fighter deaths. [NIOSH's Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation Program](#) has made over 1,000 recommendations arising from over 500 investigations since its inception in 1998.

**Energy Workers:** NIOSH conducts an occupational energy research program to more fully understand radiation cancer risk factors in radiation exposed workers and to recommend improved protective measures. NIOSH is also responsible for determining occupational radiation exposure for workers with cancer who are eligible for compensation under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000. NIOSH's dose reconstructions are used by the U.S. Department of Labor to determine the probability that a worker's cancer was "at least as likely as not" caused by his or her occupational exposure to ionizing radiation during employment at a covered facility and to award compensation benefits.

**Emergency Responders:** The mission of the NIOSH Emergency Preparedness and Response Office (EPRO) is to protect the health and safety of emergency response providers and recovery workers, through the advancement of research and collaborations, to prevent diseases, injuries, and fatalities in anticipation of, and during responses to natural and man-made disasters and novel emergent events. The nation depends on emergency responders to preserve the public's safety and health when disasters strike. To successfully meet this challenge, emergency responders must be protected from the hazardous conditions that disasters and other emergencies create. A plan for monitoring emergency responder health and safety is an important part of

protecting them. Recognizing this, NIOSH worked with the U.S. National Response Team (NRT), and a number of federal agencies, state health departments, labor unions, and volunteer emergency responder groups to develop the Emergency Responder Health Monitoring and Surveillance (ERHMS) system. The ERHMS provides best practice guidelines for protecting emergency responders over a full range of emergency types and settings. The ERHMS consists of an NRT Technical Assistance Document and A Guide for Key Decision Makers and these documents can be accessed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/erhms/>. The NIOSH Emergency Responders Resource page can also be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/emres/responders.html>.

## **Building Capacity for the Future**

Developing and supporting a new generation of researchers and practitioners is critical to the future of occupational safety and health. NIOSH funds programs to support occupational safety and health research and education through 18 regional university-based [Education and Research Centers](#); 10 [Agricultural Disease and Injury Research, Education, and Prevention Centers](#); and 28 Training Project Grants that train occupational health professionals and researchers to help meet the increasing demand for occupational physicians, occupational nurses, industrial hygienists and safety professionals. The NIOSH-supported Centers also conduct research and prevention projects to address the Nation's occupational health and safety problems.

## **State Activities**

As part of its mission, NIOSH operates programs in every state to improve the health and safety of workers. As part of these State Activities, NIOSH:

- Evaluates workplace hazards and recommends solutions when requested by employers, workers, or state or federal agencies;

- Builds State worker safety and health capacity through grants and cooperative agreements;

- Funds occupational safety and health research on a wide variety of topics at universities and other organizations;

- Supports occupational safety and health training programs. For more information on state programs see the [NIOSH state activities page](#).

For more information about NIOSH and its capabilities visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/about.html>

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