

ENHANCED WORK PLANNING INTRODUCTION FOR WORKERS

Effective safety and health protection is fostered through active worker involvement in the work planning process. Workers are the experts on how work is to be accomplished and how hazards and uncertainties associated with the work can be controlled. Moreover, they are in the front line of recognizing the actions and behavior that may put them at risk. Investigations of serious accidents and injuries over the past 5 years have consistently shown that the inadequate identification and control of hazards in the work planning process has been a predominant cause of these events.

In order to enhance the existing work planning process, the Offices of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) and Environmental Management (EM) have teamed with the Department's Operations and Field Offices to begin an Enhanced Work Planning Initiative. This effort seeks more effective integration of safety and health into the work planning process. The benefits of this initiative are to:

- Promote a lasting, fundamental change in the work planning process so that it focuses on prevention of worker accidents and illnesses.
- Develop ways to ensure worker input and participation in the planning and execution phases of the project.
- Identify, early in the planning process, safety and health hazards and workers who will be at risk.
- Educate and train the worker on potential hazards and exposures.
- Plan necessary actions and controls to eliminate recognized hazards or reduce them to acceptable levels.
- Develop procedures that ensure collection and validation of data on worker exposure to support future health surveillance activities.
- Improve efficiency in planning, reviewing, approving, and conducting work through a team approach.

Worker involvement throughout the work planning process is absolutely essential to the success of this initiative. Worker experience is invaluable in helping identify hazards associated with proposed work, in improving the efficiency of work, in identifying and eliminating unnecessary requirements, and in increasing productivity. In addition, by being continuously involved throughout the planning process, workers will be better able to use health



and safety protective measures while completing the work in the field.

The initiative is to be performed by a work planning team made up of workers, planners, engineers, safety and health staff, training professionals, and line managers. The team works together to (1) identify hazards and determine effective controls; (2) specify appropriate hazard monitoring and data collection requirements; (3) factor in worker experience, lessons learned from past work, and results from employee medical studies; (4) plan work efficiently and eliminate unnecessary review cycles; and (5) help identify critical training objectives that relate to potential hazards and exposures.

Demonstration projects have already proven that sites that participate in this initiative will realize significant near-term and long-term benefits. These include:

- Involving workers early and continuously in the work planning process, which increases communication throughout the team and enables workers to focus on actions and behavior to prevent accidents and injuries.
- Identifying appropriate risk and exposure control methods, where required.
- Reducing risks to workers through early identification and elimination or lessening of hazards.
- Ensuring collection of needed data on exposure of workers to hazards to support medical monitoring and studies of health effects of exposure.
- Satisfying appropriate standards and requirements.
- Improving the overall efficiency of the work planning process.
- Identifying, early in the process, training that will contribute to productivity; awareness of dangerous situations; and quick, safe, and intuitive reactions to uncontrolled events.

Demonstration projects are ongoing at several DOE sites including Hanford, Fernald, Mound, Oak Ridge, Savannah River, Pantex, and Rocky Flats. EH and EM plan to initiate additional projects at other key DOE sites and facilities. For more information, contact the program manager, Mr. Rick Jones, at (301) 903-6061, or fax your request for additional information to (301) 903-7773. Also contact us through our HomePage at <http://www.eh.doe.gov/wpphm/ewp/ewp2.htm>

