

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week May 6–12, 2012

Job safety stressed; kick-off event May 7

Job-related injuries and deaths know no holiday. Consider that 4,547 people died from occupational injuries in 2010. That's an average of 12 American workers each day, according to findings from the *2010 U.S. Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Preliminary Report*. In addition, companies with between 50 and 249 employees—including many private medical practices, health care clinics, and small hospitals—have the highest rate of job-related illnesses and injuries, says the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE).

To help raise awareness about workplace health and safety, NAOSH Week was created 15 years ago. This year, NAOSH Week is held May 6–12. The kick-off event will happen at the U.S. Department of Labor on May 7, and other events will be held at the U.S. Capitol, the National Zoo, and the National Gallery of Art, all in Washington, DC.

During NAOSH Week, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), ASSE, Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE), and more than 35 OSHA Alliance Program participants—including OSHA/Joint Commission Resources Alliance—representing thousands of businesses and many health care organizations from around the planet will collaborate to educate the public about the importance of preventing harm, eliminating hazards, and safeguarding health while on the job.

The NAOSH Week theme for 2012 is “Safety: What Every Business Needs,” with a spotlight on providing small and midsized companies with key workplace

safety resources. Past themes have stressed safety in a variety of environments, including the mining industry, transportation sector, and youth workplace.

“Small businesses play a vitally important role in advancing our economy and provide employment for more than half of America's workers,” says Terrie S. Norris, CSP, ARM, president, ASSE. “Yet for the typical small business owners, addressing safety and health risks in their workplaces is often difficult.”

Norris notes that everyone who cares about the health and safety of employees needs to work together to enlighten businesses about the benefits of managing and decreasing workplace risks—which can not only result in healthier and better-protected staff but a healthier bottom line, too.

The ASSE first joined with the CSSE in 2002 to promote NAOSH Week. The seven-day event is just one of the tools the 101-year-old ASSE and its 32,000 occupational safety, health, and environmental professional members employ throughout the year to advocate occupational safety.

Through the OSHA and ASSE Alliance, ASSE is responsible for developing and implementing NAOSH Week activities throughout North America. In past years, for example, ASSE members have hosted ergonomic awareness events, conducted fleet safety and teen worker safety classes, distributed catastrophe preparedness information and safety brochures, aided Habitat for Humanity, presented a personal protective equipment (PPE) fashion show, and donated PPE to businesses.

One of NAOSH Week's most anticipated events is Occupational Safety and Health Professional (OSHP) Day, which falls on May 9. First instituted in 2006, OSHP Day was established to pay tribute to occupational safety, health, and environmental professionals throughout the world who have made the highest commitment to protecting people, property, and the planet. ASSE honors these nominated individuals each year on its website and in other publications.

The Joint Commission emphasizes safety throughout its Environment of Care, Emergency Management, and Life Safety standards, all of which are reported on regularly in this newsletter. The intersection of health care worker safety and worker safety is the theme of continuing articles in *EC News*; these articles are the result of the OSHA/Joint Commission Resources Alliance. This alliance encourages health care workers to participate in NAOSH Week events and campaigns. Getting involved can lead to better education of patients and fellow professionals about the advantages a safe job environment offers to workers as well as their loved ones, business partners, and local communities.

Visit the NAOSH website, at <http://asse.org/naosh>, to do the following:

- Learn what health care workers can do to support NAOSH Week and OSHP Day
- Submit a NAOSH, OSHP Day, or kids' “safety-on-the-job” event that your health care organization is planning

(continued on page 11)

NAOSH Week May 6–12, 2012

(continued from page 10)

- Nominate a NAOSH champion who has been instrumental in helping inform people and businesses on the value of being safe at work
- View winning entries in the 10th

Annual ASSE Kids Safety-on-the-Job 2012 Poster Contest, as well as photos, billboards, and posters from past events

- Read workplace safety statistics and download brochures and educational materials 

This article was developed through the cooperative efforts of the OSHA/Joint Commission Resources Alliance.

