

July 15, 2004 Safety and Health Council Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES

Jeffery Nulf, Office of the Secretary (OS), Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration
Gerald Lucas, OS, Deputy Director Office Human Resources Management
Richard Hartman, OS, Director, Office of Occupational Safety and Health (OOSH)
Alex Mayes, OS, Office of Occupational Safety and Health
Kathy Mattingly, OS, Office of Occupational Safety and Health
April Prather-Nichols, OS, Office of Occupational Safety and Health
Camille Carraway, OS, Office of Occupational Safety and Health
Pamela Moulder, ESA, Office of Finance and Administration
Jeannette Chiari, BIS, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Management
Tony Proctor, ITA, Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Tony Calza, NTIA, Office of Policy Coordination and Management
William Corfitzen, ITA, Office of Export Promotion Services
Carolyn Cumberland, CENSUS, Safety Manager
Bruce Zaczynski, NOAA, Director, Environment, Safety and Occupational Health
Tom Altvater, NOAA, Chief, Safety Division
Geraldine Marshall, OS, Office of Finance and Management
Rosamond Rutledge-Burns, NIST, Director, Occupational Safety and Health Division
Alan Willard, NTIS, Office of Chief Information Officer
Demetria Gregory, BIS, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Management
Lewis F. Williams, ITA, Telecommunications Center
Tom Murphy, EDA
Steve Savoy, OS, Space and Building Management

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Hartman opened the meeting and welcomed each of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) council members and participants and introduced Mr. Jeffery Nulf, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration. Mr. Nulf spoke briefly to the group restating the importance of the council and its charter to ensure a safe and healthful working environment for all DOC employees and turned the meeting over to Dr. Hartman.

OPEN ITEMS

- Dr. Hartman reviewed all open items beginning with the Strengthen Communication Initiative. He stated OOSH just filled an administrative assistant position with Ms. Stephanie Davis who will be working with Dr. Hartman to get on the schedules of bureau and agency Safety and Occupational Health Managers and their supervisors, to discuss expectations from each party. She will contact Mr. Murphy from EDA early in August to start this initiative.

- Dr. Hartman stated the two other open items: 1) standardized Workers' Compensation training, and 2) DAO and CD-137 updates would be discussed during "The Way Ahead."

DOC "SHARE" PERFORMANCE MEASURES

DOC reported 256 injury and illness cases during the first two quarters of FY 2004 year-to-date (YTD), of which 106 were lost-time cases. If the second quarter data is extrapolated throughout the year, DOC will realize a 5.1 percent decrease of injury and illness claims and a 17.1 percent decrease of lost-time claims when compared to FY 2003.

When the DOC injury and illness cases and lost-time data is broken down by the major bureaus, NOAA (81 cases) and the Bureau of Census (Census) (129 cases) contribute 210 of the 256 injury and illness cases. Dr. Hartman stated that OOSH, along with the OSH corporate board, would discuss cause and remedies at the next meeting scheduled for August 13, 2004. **(OPEN)**

When the DOC injury, illness and lost-time case data are converted to rates for comparison across agencies, the injury and illness case rate was 0.69 and the lost-time case rate was 0.29 for the first two quarters of FY 2004. If second quarter data is extrapolated DOC will realize a 5.4 percent decrease in injury illness rates and 20 percent decrease in lost-time case rates when compared to FY 2003.

When the DOC injury and illness case rates are broken down by the major bureaus, all were below the DOC 0.69 injury illness case rate except for Census which was almost double at 1.28. Dr. Hartman stated that OOSH, along with the OSH corporate board, would discuss cause and remedies at the next meeting scheduled for August 13, 2004. **(OPEN)**

Consistent with the President's SHARE initiative, Dr. Hartman stated that DOC is now measuring average lost production workdays, which is the average number of workdays lost due to an injury or illness. To date, DOC has seen a 10 percent increase in lost production days when compared to FY 2003. This increase may be attributed to the agencies' slowness to process workers' compensation claims after an injury or illness, which creates delays in medical services rendered and ultimately extends the time a worker is not at work.

Dr. Hartman reviewed the data to evaluate workers' compensation injury and illness reporting timeliness, where the standard is 14 calendar days. During both quarters of FY 2004, DOC has exceeded the 14-day reporting period to Office Workers' Compensation Program, where the delays are related to DOC's slowness to fill out and forward the required Workers' Compensation (WC) paperwork to the Department of Labor (DOL). Currently, DOC agencies and bureaus take 24-29 days to forward claims to DOC claims manager, Contract Claims Services Inc. (CCSI), who then process and submit the claims to DOL within 6 days.

During last OSH Council, OOSH stated they would provide data for each bureau and agency regarding workers' compensation injury and illness reporting timeliness (see Table 1). Dr. Hartman went over the table and stated that OOSH will use this information to target and provide standardized workers' compensation supervisor and refresher training as a short-term

solution to improve workers' compensation injury and illness reporting timeliness. During the long-term, OOSH is working with DOL to review their Safety Health Information Management System (SHIMS) to improve timeliness.

Agency	Total Claims	DOC to CCSI	CCSI to DOL	Total Days *
NOAA	83	26	5	31
Census	100	26	5	31
NIST	13	32	8	40
OS	8	20	2	22
BEA	1	45	16	61
BIS	4	35	8	43
EDA	1	14	15	29
ITA	4	14	2	16

* Standard is 14 Calendar Days

Table 1. Workers' Compensation Injury and Illness Reporting Timeliness by Agency 1st and 2nd Quarters of Fiscal Year 04.

For the first two quarters of FY 2004, DOC's workers' compensation costs are \$7,482,235. If the data is extrapolated throughout the year, DOC workers' compensation costs appear to be stabilizing with FY 2003 costs, which was a 4.2 percent decrease from FY 2002. To realize further reductions DOC is working with DOL to expedite claims processing with SHIMS and DOC instituted an innovative approach to controvert WC claims.

When the DOC workers' compensation costs were broken down by agency and bureau, NOAA and Census represented approximately 40 percent of all Departmental costs. Dr. Hartman stated that much of Census's cost can be attributed to the Decennial, however, he stated that OOSH along with the OSH corporate board would discuss causes and ways to contain and reduce workers' compensation costs at the next meeting scheduled for August 13, 2004. **(OPEN)**

Dr. Hartman closed the performance measures with the DOC's Continuation of Pay (COP) cost statistics, which appear to be stabilizing where the first two quarters, have resulted in a total of \$156,603. He stated that DOC is working with DOL and established a new process to controvert claims to continue potential reductions in COP costs.

THE WAY AHEAD

Dr. Hartman reviewed the vision of the "The Way Ahead" and its four elements:

- Policy, Guidance, and Oversight
- Leveraging Resources
- OSH Standardization
- Training and Awareness

Policy, Guidance, and Oversight

Mr. Mayes updated the group on DAO 202-810, Workers' Compensation for Federal Employees and DAO 203-9, Accident Investigation Reporting. Currently, they are being coordinated with the Office of Management and Organization Office (OMO) and the Office of General Counsel (OGC).

Following the group's comments at the last OSH Council meeting we again reviewed the CD-137, "Report of Injury, Illness, Accident or Fatality" and made a few modifications. A copy of the updated CD-137 was provided to council members. The final version will be finalized and distributed by August 1, 2004. Mr. Mayes addressed a comment from the last OSH Council meeting concerning how to report property damage, which is not addressed on the CD-137. Mr. Mayes stated that property damage will be reported on a CD-52, "Report of Review of Property" and motor vehicle incidents will be reported on the SF-91, "Motor Vehicle Accident Report" and the CD-94, "Statement of Witness." Mr. Mayes stated that all forms are easily accessible on the DOC web site.

Mr. Mayes informed the group that OOSH would conduct five oversight audits during this fiscal year, which ends on September 30th to include a self-inspection of OOSH, and audits at NIST, NOAA, Census, and PTO. To accomplish these oversight assessments Mr. Mayes stated that OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) guidelines will be used to conduct oversight audits at DOC facilities. He stated that the VPP program is over 20 years old, and has been widely accepted by both private industry and the Federal government as a valuable aid in assessing OSH program effectiveness. A copy of the newly developed assessment guide was provided where there are 58 major program elements in the DOC OSH Program Assessment Guide, all of which pertain to essential aspects of the OSH program.

He stated OSH managers from NIST, NOAA, Census, and PTO would be requested to conduct a self-assessment of their OSH programs using this guide by July 30th. By conducting this self-assessment prior to our visit, they will identify which program areas need attention.

Leveraging Resources

Mrs. Carraway discussed the results from the OSH Officer Profile questionnaire and thanked all for responding. There were over 193 profiles submitted. She stated that different bureaus had different approaches to running OSH, as well as growing and developing OSH staff. The data showed that most OSH staff were in the general series rather than the safety and health professional series. She identified that there were no consistent training methods. The profiles identified there are specialized skills (e.g., health physics) that DOC can leverage.

Mrs. Carraway suggested that the information be posted on the Internet, whereupon, Mr. Alan Willard (NTIS) recommended that OOSH use a List Serve Technique. Dr. Hartman suggested that Alan and Camille will work off-line to identify a better/alternative communication method for OSH personnel. **(OPEN)**

OSH Standardization

Mrs. Carraway continued “The Way Ahead” by providing the group updates on two automated systems to help DOC standardize OSH business practices. The first system covered was the Compliance and Process Tracking (CPTrack) System. A demo was conducted on June 16, 2004, at the Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB), which included 16 participants from six bureaus, and the US Department of State. She stated OOSH was proceeding with acquisition and would pilot test the system in two large bureaus, one operating unit and HCHB by end of FY04. Lessons learned from the pilot test will be implemented in the FY05 customization.

She then updated the group on the SHIMS. She stated that due to the agencywide deployment that OOSH has been working closely with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). Currently, OOSH and CIO are developing the business case and will present to the appropriate approval boards prior to pilot testing at HCHB.

Training and Awareness

Mrs. Mattingly updated the group on the workers’ compensation reporting timeliness issue from the last DOC OSH Council meeting. She stated that timeliness in submitting WC forms continues to be problematic. In the second quarter of FY 2004 there were 126 claims filed and the average time from DOC to CCSI was 29 days and the average time from CCSI to DOL was 6 days.

She discussed her plans to implement a standardized supervisory training program that would not only help improve our timeliness, but would help supervisors be aware of their responsibilities when one of their employees is injured on the job, and would enable them to provide their employees with benefits to which they are entitled. OOSH will work with the agencies to coordinate this training program. The first agencies to receive the training will be the Bureau of Industry and Security and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. **(OPEN)**

April Prather-Nichols provided an update on the OSH Customer Survey, informing the council that the survey is in the developmental stage with OHRM’s Information Technology (IT) office, and thanked the OOSH Survey Working group: Carol Barnhill, Jeff Scherr, George Bennett, and Jimmy Griffith. She also alerted the council that she will be forwarding an e-mail requesting that each bureau provide to her a listing of their line offices, in-house agencies. **(OPEN)**

Ms. Prather-Nichols was advised that while revising the survey, she may want to contact OGC to make certain that the survey would not be violating any regulations.

BUREAUS

- **NIST**, Rosamond Rutledge-Burns, briefed the group on NIST “Safety Day” held on June 21st. The theme was “Soakin’ Up Safety,” and was held in conjunction with Maryland Safety Council. Twenty vendors participated, which included an exhibition of a wide variety of safety and health equipment. Representatives from Occupational Safety

and Health Administration (OSHA) also attended and presented material and handouts, which included guidance on how to prevent slip, trip, and fall accidents, safe driving, radiation safety, and other topics. A representative from DOL provided a presentation on the SHARE Initiative, and the president of the Maryland Safety Council spoke about motivating others to work safely. NIST handed out 750 questionnaires for feedback on the event, and over 500 were returned with overwhelming favorable responses. Additionally, many good ideas were received for next year's "Safety Day."

She stated that NIST has restructured and enhanced their New Employee OSH Training to include 1-½ hours of OSH orientation to new employees. This training is being provided at both the Gaithersburg, Maryland and Boulder, Colorado, sites. At Boulder, NOAA and NTIA employees also attend this New Employee OSH Training. Previously, this training was limited to 15 minutes and was an abbreviated version.

She also briefed the group on the Health Physics Society who conducted a "Summer School" session at NIST July 6-9, 2004, which presented the latest techniques on radiation safety.

- **NOAA**, Bruce Zaczynski, stated that NOAA has reconfigured their OSH organizational structure so that now two Division Chiefs, OSH and Environmental Compliance, now report directly to him. Mr. Zaczynski now oversees the OSH and Environmental Compliance programs at four Administrative Support Centers: EASC, CASC, MASC and WASC. Previously, the organizational chart showed a dotted line between these ASCs and Mr. Zaczynski, and he had no control or oversight of what was occurring in the field. Mr. Zaczynski changed this, and they all report directly to him. He stated that NOAA's lost time injury rates have declined in the past several months, and believes it was partially due to an amazing increase of OSH awareness now going on in the field where NOAA is now capturing "near miss" incidents in our accident recording.

Dr. Hartman asked how the organization changed the reporting and oversight from operations to his office. Mr. Zaczynski stated that was rather involved and asked if this could be discussed off-line. Dr. Hartman also asked if NOAA could provide a point paper describing how his office was able to effect the change from the Regional Safety Managers reporting to the Facilities and Logistics Division Chiefs to him.

- **BIS**, Demetria Gregory, stated that BIS has been working hard to develop the new BIS OSH Program. She stated that BIS senior management has supported the program to include increasing of funding for the OSH Program. BIS initiatives include:
 1. An audio-visual program to promote the OSH program;
 2. A brochure to make people aware of the OSH program;
 3. A quarterly OSH newsletter that is sent to BIS employees electronically which provides seasonal OSH tips, workers' compensation data, and inspection checklists;
 4. A safety poster, which will be distributed throughout the bureau;

5. New OSH training programs, which include New Employee Orientation for BIS law enforcement personnel, accident prevention guidance, and information about workers' compensation; and
6. A Safety Committee has been formed which includes representative from throughout the bureau.

Dr. Hartman invited Ms. Gregory to the next DOC OSH corporate council meeting to further describe BIS OSH initiatives. **(OPEN)**

The meeting concluded at 3:00 PM

**NEXT MEETING, THURSDAY, October 21, 2004, 1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M., HCHB,
ROOM 6800**