

# Executive Safety Update

The Monthly News Bulletin of the Construction Safety Center

Vol. 17, Issue 6 – December 2009

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## Head of NIOSH to Keynote at Annual Construction Safety Conference & Expo!

The Construction Safety Council will be hosting its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Construction Safety Conference February 16 -18, 2010 in Rosemont, IL. This is the largest construction-specific safety conference held in the US.

Dr. John Howard, director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health will deliver the keynote address on Tuesday, February 16.

John Howard, M.D., M.P.H., J.D., LL.M, is the Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Howard also serves as the Coordinator of the Department's World Trade Center Health Programs.

Dr. Howard was first appointed NIOSH Director in 2002 and served until 2008. In 2008 and 2009, Dr. Howard worked as a consultant with the U.S. Government's Afghanistan Health Initiative and with the Public Health Law Program in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Prior to his appointment as Director of NIOSH in 2002, Dr. Howard served as Chief of the Division of Occupational Safety and Health in the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency from 1991 through 2002.

Dr. Howard received a Doctor of Medicine degree from Loyola University of Chicago, a Master of Public Health degree from the Harvard School of Public Health, a Doctor of Law degree from the University of California at Los Angeles, and a Master of Law degree in Administrative Law and Economic Regulation from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Howard is board-certified in internal medicine and occupational medicine. He is admitted to the practice of medicine and law in the State of California and in the District of Columbia, and he is a member U.S. Supreme Court bar. He has written numerous articles on occupational health law and policy.

### Executive Safety Update

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Over 60 sessions will be offered throughout the three days. There will be some old favorites, such as sessions on fall protection, power line safety and workers' compensation issues. Additionally, sessions on electrical safety, industrial hygiene issues and work zone safety will be presented to give a full range of sessions to choose from! In addition, over 80 exhibitors will be on hand to demonstrate the latest innovations in safety and health products and services. The exhibits will be open the first two days of the conference (February 16 & 17).

In honor of its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the Construction Safety Council will host a Safety Awards Banquet during lunch on Wednesday, February 17. Awards for outstanding efforts in safety and health and training will be awarded along with student scholarships.

The conference brings together a diverse audience, including construction owners/users, contractors, researchers, government officials, safety and health professionals, unions, and workers to share information and ideas about effective safety and health interventions and how to move best practices from inception to practical implementation.

The conference kicks off on Tuesday, February 16 at 7:30 am. The cost of the conference is \$245 for one day or \$395 for the first two days, \$295 for the professional development seminars on February 18, or \$595 for all three days. The conference is a terrific value - these prices include registration materials, continental breakfast, lunch, entrance to Safety Expo '10 for two days, and more! Anyone who registers online at [www.buildsafe.org](http://www.buildsafe.org) before the end of the year will receive a further discount.

A full agenda is available on our website at [www.buildsafe.org](http://www.buildsafe.org). If you would like more information, please contact us at 800-552-7744.



FEBRUARY 16-18, 2010  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the Construction  
Safety Conference  
& Exposition



Donald E. Stephens Convention Center  
Rosemont, Illinois



## Save the Date!

February 16-18, 2010  
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center  
Rosemont, IL

Registration is now open!

[Click here for more information](#)

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## US Department of Labor unveils new 'Open Government' efforts

The U.S. Department of Labor today announced a broad array of efforts designed to improve the public's accessibility to its agencies and ensure the department can function more effectively. The work is part of the Obama Administration's continued commitment to improved accountability, transparency and service to the American public.

"True progress is not something that happens to people. It happens because of them. And, it all begins with information that can be shared in a timely and effective manner," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "People deserve to know what their government is doing on their behalf, and what they can do to participate actively in that work. I am proud of the steps we are taking to make that possible, and I look forward to broadening our efforts further."

Previously, only the Labor Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration posted worker fatality data on its Web site. Now, the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is also systematically publishing employer-specific information about occupational fatalities online and making these data available for easy download. Comprehensive, weekly reports on this topic are now available at [http://www.osha.gov/dep/fatcat/dep\\_fatcat.html](http://www.osha.gov/dep/fatcat/dep_fatcat.html). Employers with reported fatalities will have an incentive to take steps to improve safety and prevent future accidents. In addition, responsible employers will be able to use the database to identify dangerous conditions and take precautions.

Other agencies at the department are also making additional information available to the public. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is contributing a vast array of new information to <http://www.data.gov>, enhancing its already impressive searchable databases. The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, meanwhile, recently launched a Web-based competition at <http://www.dol.gov/challenge>. It enlists entrepreneurs and technology firms, workforce professionals and the public to help identify the best online tools to enable America's job seekers to quickly and easily connect with jobs.

The department's commitment to enhance participation also extends to the regulatory arena. On Monday, Dec. 7, the department rolled out its regulatory agenda entirely online. All of the information - including more than eight hours of Web chats with the secretary of labor and other Department of Labor officials - can be viewed at <http://www.dol.gov/regulations>. The Web page also contains links to resources and testimonials, and it even helps visitors submit comments to specific regulations.

"As a legislator, I always felt it was essential for people to take part in the processes of their government. As a regulator, I feel exactly the same way," added Solis.

The department also has launched an extremely successful weekly e-newsletter, which offers readers the latest details in everything from the department's enforcement and compliance assistance to job openings at its various agencies. Not content with one-way communication, however, the department is also using social media tools to engage the public online - and tapping into the power of crowd sourcing. In fact, the Department of Labor's presence on Facebook and Twitter is already helping to link knowledge communities together and speeding up the sharing of valuable information among the department, state workforce agencies, a variety of stakeholders and, most importantly, the American public.

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## DAVID MICHAELS

Assistant Secretary of Labor for  
Occupational Safety and Health



### Labor Department Names David Michaels as Assistant Secretary of Labor

David Michaels, PhD, MPH, is an epidemiologist and a nationally recognized leader in the scientific community's efforts to protect the integrity of the science on which public health and environmental policies and regulation are based. Before coming to OSHA on December 9, 2009, he was Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, directing the department's Project on Scientific Knowledge and Public Policy.

From 1998 to 2001, Dr. Michaels served as Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environment, Safety and Health. In that position, he was the chief architect of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, the historic initiative to compensate nuclear weapons workers who contracted occupational illnesses as a result of exposure to radiation, beryllium and other hazards. The program has provided more than \$5 billion in payments to sick workers and the families of deceased workers.

In 2006, Dr. Michaels was awarded the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award, and, in 2009, the John P. McGovern Science and Society Award given by Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society, for his work in scientific integrity and for gaining compensation for nuclear weapons workers.

Dr. Michaels is the author of many scientific and policy publications, including *Doubt is Their Product: How Industry's War on Science Threatens Your Health* (Oxford University Press, 2008). He is a graduate of the City College of New York, and holds a Master in Public Health and PhD from Columbia University.

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## OSHA issues proposed rule to adopt the Globally Harmonized Hazard Communication System

A proposed rule to align the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) with provisions of the United Nations Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) will be published in the September 30 [Federal Register](#).

The current HCS requires chemical manufacturers and importers to evaluate the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import and provide information to subsequent users. The current standard requires all employers to have a hazard communication program for workers exposed to hazardous chemicals. The program includes materials such as container labels, safety data sheets, and employee training.

A number of countries, including the United States, international organizations and stakeholders participated in developing the GHS to address inconsistencies in hazard classification and communications. The GHS was developed to provide a single, harmonized system to classify chemicals, labels and safety data sheets with the primary benefit of increasing the quality and consistency of information provided to workers, employers and chemical users. Under the GHS, labels would include signal words, pictograms, and hazard and precautionary statements. Additionally, information on safety data sheets would be presented in a designated order.

"The proposal to align the hazard communication standard with the GHS will improve the consistency and effectiveness of hazard communications and reduce chemical-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities," said acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Jordan Barab. "Following the GHS approach will increase workplace safety, facilitate international trade in chemicals, and generate cost savings from production efficiencies for firms that manufacture and use hazardous chemicals."

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, OSHA's role is to promote safe and healthful working conditions for America's men and women by setting and enforcing standards and providing training, outreach, and education. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).