

DoD Ergonomics Working Group NEWS



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President Bush Reinforces Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's Call to Reduce Injuries by 50%



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
January 9, 2004

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

SUBJECT: The Safety, Health, and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) Initiative

The cost of Federal workplace injuries, when measured by workers' compensation losses, is more than \$2 billion and 2 million lost production days annually. In fiscal year 2003, the Federal workforce of almost 2.7 million filed more than 168,000 injury claims. Behind these numbers lie pain and suffering by workers and their families. Clearly, Government agencies should strive to do more to improve workplace safety and health and reduce the costs of injury to workers and taxpayers. Many workplace injuries are preventable.

Therefore, I am establishing SHARE: Safety, Health, and Return-to-Employment Initiative, a safe workplace initiative for fiscal years 2004-2006. The initiative's four goals cover the most important elements of a strong safety and health management program: lower workplace injury and illness case rates, lower lost-time injury and illness case rates, timely reporting of injuries and illnesses, and fewer lost days resulting from work injuries and illnesses. The Secretary of Labor will lead the SHARE Initiative and will measure the performance of each department and agency against the goals. I direct all executive branch departments and agencies to participate in SHARE for this 3-year period.

Each department and agency will collaborate with the Department of Labor to establish challenging annual goals based on its current performance in the four areas. The Department of Labor will measure and track agency performance, and will report to me annually on each agency's progress towards meeting its goals. The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Office of Workers' Compensation Programs will also work with Federal departments and agencies to develop new workplace strategies to improve safety and health at high injury rate sites, assist them in improving the timeliness of reporting claims through electronic and other means, and guide them in providing suitable work and tools for injured and disabled employees.

Federal supervisors and managers must focus management tools and resources on eliminating unsafe and unhealthy working conditions. Federal employees should be encouraged to perform their jobs safely, effectively, and alertly to remain injury-free. Dedication to ensuring our Government workforce family is safe and healthy preserves the resources of Government and helps promote the delivery of Government services to the American people.

GEORGE W. BUSH