

SAFETY SENSE

Workplace Safety—Good News for Workers

(NAPSA)—A recent National Academy of Science report finds that one million workers must take time off each year because of lower back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other musculoskeletal disorders. It's also estimated that seventeen people die on the job every single day.

In fact, more people die at unsafe workplaces every year than are killed by prostate cancer and breast cancer combined. While these terrible cancers have rightly sparked nationwide crusades, workplace injuries and deaths have so far escaped the notice of most of the public, the press, and the nations political leaders. Until now.

For the first time ever, this year, a high-profile workplace safety summit was held that brought together business, labor, government, trade and professional associations, academia, foundations, human rights and advocacy groups, think tanks, and congressional staff. They met for two days to examine and debate the costs and the human toll associated with an unsafe workplace. The summit was hosted by the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University and co-sponsored by the American Red Cross, DuPont, The FIGHT Project, Georgetown Business Ethics



The Workplace Safety Summit made clear that workplace accidents are preventable.

Institute, and the National Safety Council. The event was underwritten by DuPont.

It brought together some of the best minds and leading organizations grappling with the many issues surrounding workplace safety in the United States. For two days corporate leaders, government executives, public policy makers, human rights advocates, and the families of people injured and killed in workplace accidents shared statistics, stories, and ideas for making the workplace safer. They discussed workplace safety trends, recognizing that understanding the extent and nature of workplace accidents, injuries, illnesses, and deaths is

crucial to eliminating the risks. Next, summit attendees examined the human cost of unsafe work environments, looking at the compelling human stories behind the statistics.

That discussion led to an assessment of workplace safety data, which clearly indicates that injury prevention on the job enhances productivity and improves a company's bottom line. The summit closed with sessions devoted to coming up with practical next steps, so that the energy and ideas that characterized these discussions could be translated into initiatives that can lead to real progress making Americas workplaces safer.

The Workplace Safety Summit made clear that accidents on the job are not just random acts of fate. They are not one of the inevitable costs of doing business. They are preventable. The next several months will determine exactly how this group of workplace safety opinion leaders takes two days of meaningful discussion and turns it into an action plan for the future.

One thing is clear, for many participants at the event, zero is the only acceptable number of workplace accidents in a given year. That's good news for American workers and their families.