

Good News Department

Guidelines Are Giving Workers A Helping Hand

(NAPSA)—There is good news for workers in America: the workplace is becoming a safer place—and workers are reaping the benefits.

That's because injuries related to ergonomics—also known as musculoskeletal disorders or MSDs—in America's workplaces declined in 2001, according to the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

From 2000 to 2001, the total number of MSD cases declined by nearly 10 percent—a greater decline than the overall decline of over seven percent for all injuries that required days away from work.

But this good news isn't good enough for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA wants to lower the number of injuries and illnesses in the workplace even more, and ergonomic injuries are an important focus of OSHA's plans.

The agency is working to accomplish this through a comprehensive plan that includes industry-and-task-specific guidelines to help workers and employers design programs to reduce ergonomic injuries.

There will be tough enforcement measures for employers who refuse to keep their workers safe. There will also be outreach efforts to help employers find resources to help their employees.

A research advisory committee has been put together to look at existing research and identify



Thanks to the efforts of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, injuries related to ergonomics in the workplace are down.

gaps where more research is needed. And OSHA will make dedicated efforts to protect Hispanic and other immigrant workers from ergonomic injuries.

And progress is being made. Draft guidelines for the poultry processing and retail grocery industries were published in the spring of 2003. Draft guidelines for the shipyard industry are scheduled to follow.

Safety and health add value to business, the workplace and life. For help and more information about preventing workplace accidents and injuries, visit the Web site at www.osha.gov.