

Matters To Be Discussed

As the lead federal health agency for research into the causes and prevention of work injuries and diseases, NIOSH has a responsibility to continually assess the state of existing knowledge and define future research needs and priorities. The development of a national research agenda will assist NIOSH and the occupational safety and health research community in establishing priorities and targeting some of the scientific needs of the next decade that offer the greatest potential for advancing the safety and health of

workers. Establishing these priorities is especially important in light of increasing fiscal constraints on occupational safety and health research in both the public and private sectors. The agenda is intended to serve decision-makers and scientists working throughout the field, employed in government, corporate, labor, university, and private research programs.

NIOSH has developed a discussion list of possible items for the national research agenda. A small group of scientists reviewed a wide array of information ranging from the scope of

occupational safety and health problems to future employment projections. Other scientific agenda-setting processes were also considered. In addition, the group agreed on the scope of agenda items it would propose. For example, it decided that a category such as "occupational lung diseases" would be too inclusive to serve as a research priority, that items of this breadth would encompass the field rather than provide decision-makers and scientists with focussed direction to meet some of the greatest needs and opportunities for prevention. The group ultimately listed approximately 50 items:

Health response	Exposure
Traumatic Injury: —Eye Injury —Electrocutions —Falls Neck, Shoulder & Other Upper Extremity Disorders Low Back Disorders Fertility and Pregnancy Outcomes Occupational Asthma Pneumoconioses Inhalation Injury Hypersensitivity Lung Disease Occupational Chronic Diseases (Selected): —Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease —Chronic Renal Disease —Ischemic Heart Disease —Neurodegenerative Disease (Cognitive & Movement Disorders) Occupational Infectious Diseases Depression and Anxiety Immune Dysfunction Neuroimmune Function Hearing Loss Contact Dermatitis	Chemical Mixtures (Including Hazardous Waste). Pesticides. Solvents. Oils and related derivatives. (e.g., Cutting Fluids, Diesel). Indoor Environment. Thermal stresses. Mineral and Synthetic Fibers. Metals and Related Compounds. Hormonally Active Substances. Violence/Assaults. Motor Vehicles. Heavy Machinery. Hand Tools. Mechanical Stressors Noise. Electric and Magnetic Fields. Behavioral Risk Factors.
Sector—work environment—workforce	Research process
Construction Agriculture Small Businesses Work Organization (Changing Economy and Workforce) Emerging Technologies Vulnerable Populations Service Workers	Intervention and Prevention Effectiveness Research Engineering and Technologic Solutions Exposure Assessment Methods Development Hazard Surveillance Disease Surveillance Injury Surveillance Risk Assessment Methodology Identification of Molecular Correlates of Cancer and other Chronic Diseases Occupational Health Services Research (e.g., Manpower Needs; Clinical Outcomes Research)

From this list and additional items that are recommended, NIOSH anticipates producing a final agenda of 15–25 of the highest scientific priorities for advancing safety and health. The following criteria were used in developing this initial discussion list and are proposed for the development of the research agenda: (1) The seriousness

of the hazard in terms of death, injury, disease, disability, and economic impact; (2) the number of workers exposed or the magnitude of the risk; (3) the potential for risk reduction; (4) the expected trend in the importance of the subject; and, (5) the likelihood that the results of targeted research over the next

decade will improve disease and injury prevention to protect worker health.

NIOSH is seeking input over the next five months to assure that the final agenda includes input from the broadest base of occupational safety and health expertise. In addition to the three meetings described in this announcement, the process for public