
Protecting Workers During Recovery and Rebuilding

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Topics

- NIOSH's Role in LA
 - Activities/Approach
- Exposures (what we knew/didn't know)
- What is Occurring
 - HHE Program
- Lessons Learned

OSH Activities

- Three Onsite field teams in New Orleans
- One LNO to ESF-8 in Baton Rouge
- One LNO to State EOC
- Information dissemination
- Training and outreach
- Considered Biomonitoring
- Considered a Worker Registry

NIOSH's role in LA

- NO Teams
 - ALL workers
 - Under CDC umbrella
 - Worker S&H Annex
 - NOPD and NOFD studies
 - Mini-HHEs
 - Total dust, metals, silica, asbestos, noise
 - Job Fairs
 - Became sources of info for *ALL* CDC related activities

JFO and State EOC

- Coordinated NIOSH's activities within LA
- Link to field personnel and NIOSH
- Inter-Agency Safety Committee
 - Wrote and reviewed JHAs
 - Debris meetings
 - Training of workers
- State EOC
 - Worked directly with the State on mold issues

Work Activities /Protective Approach

Occupations at risk (phased)

- Debris removal and environmental cleanup
 - Levee rebuilding
 - Infrastructure (industrial) rebuilding
 - Residential refurbishment
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- Worker Safety and Health Annex (NRP)
 - Used contacts established as a member of the NRT, Worker Safety and Health Subcommittee



Workplace
Safety and Health









Exposures

- Environmental sediment data (metals)
 - Worst case modeling to OEL's
- Industrial hygiene data
 - Metals, Asbestos, PAH's, VOC's, Silica
 - Various tasks
- Heat Stress, Noise
- Psychological Stress and Work Organization
- Trauma Risk (chain saws, alligators, falls, trips, etc.)
- Mold

Successes



Vietnamese Outreach



Latino Outreach

Failure



Fatality at one of the Debris Collection Sites



Workplace
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Successes - Job Fairs

St. Bernard Parish



Houston



Workplace
Safety and Health



Successes - Federal Partners

- NIEHS
 - Informed NIEHS of job fairs and discussed needed training
- OSHA
 - IAG
- FOH
 - Worked with FOH to ensure that Federal Workers were getting necessary mental health support
- USACE - ongoing
- ESF-8
 - Worked in JFO as a part of the ESF-8 desk along with OSHA

Successes - Unions

- Worked closely with unions to ensure workers were/are protected.
- Kept unions informed of the data NIOSH collected.
- Worked with CPWR on training needs.

Some Challenges

- The size of the problem
 - How many workers
 - Multiple Employers
 - Employee demographics (non-union, undocumented)
 - Who is doing what (Diffuse)
 - Training (Federal and non-Federal)
 - Beyond New Orleans

Some Challenges, Cont.

- Exposure Characterization
 - Variability (environment)
 - Variability (activities)
 - Broad area affected
 - Activity phase
- Work Practice/Training
- Risk Communication

Lessons Learned

- Prior professional relationships were absolutely crucial to getting the job done.
 - Previous responses, NRT, etc.
- Worker Safety and Health vs. Public Health Issues
 - NIOSH struggled with this somewhat.
- Safety issues out numbered “IH” issues.
- Overwhelming size of disaster made for difficulty in protecting workers.
- Stress levels were astronomical.
- At the end of the day, we all worked together to protect workers.

Protecting the Workers

Questions/Comments?



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