

# ***NIOSH Electric Utility Research Priorities***

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# NIOSH National Occupational Research Agenda

- The National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) is a partnership program to stimulate innovative research and workplace interventions that will lead to improvements in worker safety and health.
- Unveiled in 1996, NORA has become a research framework for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the nation.
- Diverse parties collaborate to identify the most critical issues in workplace safety and health and to develop goals and objectives for addressing these needs.
- NORA entered its second decade in 2006 with a new structure:
  - Multi-stakeholder NORA Sector Councils are developing and implementing research agendas for the occupational safety and health community over the decade.
  - NIOSH is the steward of NORA and facilitates the work of the multi-stakeholder NORA Sector Councils, which are developing and implementing research agendas for the occupational safety and health community over the decade.

# NORA groups industries into eight sectors

- There are eight sectors based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.
- The Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities (TWU) sector encompasses NAICS code groupings 48, 49, and 22.
  - The Transportation sector (NAICS 48) covers all modes of transporting passengers and cargo: air, rail, water, road, and pipeline; as well as support activities related to all modes.
  - The Warehousing sector (NAICS 49) consists of establishments engaged primarily in warehousing and storage of goods.
  - The Utilities sector (NAICS 22) covers electric power, natural gas, water, sewage, and other systems.

# NORA TWU Sector Council

- The NORA Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities sector Council (TWU-SC) is made up of approximately 25 individuals who represent diverse interests across this wide-ranging sector.
- The TWU-SC is co-led by one NIOSH representative and another member from outside NIOSH.
- The mission of the TWU-SC is:  
*“To implement a focused program of surveillance, research, and prevention that leads to a sustained reduction in occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in this industry sector”.*

# NORA TWU Sector Goals

- Identify the research, information, and actions most urgently needed to further prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses in the TWU sector.
- Provides a vehicle for industry stakeholders to describe the most relevant issues, gaps, and safety and health needs for the sector.
- Guide researchers to relevant topic areas for research proposals.
- Encourage dialogue and partnering among stakeholders on a subset of key issues, thereby increasing our collective ability to make an impact in reducing injuries and illnesses among workers in the TWU industries.

# Potential Users of NORA

## **1. Research funding sources**

- a) Federal and state agencies
- b) Research foundations
- c) Industry-supported research organizations

## **2. Public and private researchers**

- a) Government researchers
- b) Academic researchers
- c) Industry and foundation-based researchers

## **3. Industry organizations**

- a) Trade associations
- b) Vehicle and equipment manufacturers and distributors

## **4. Labor organizations**

## **5. Regulatory agencies at federal, state, and local levels**

## **6. Non-profit organizations**

## **7. Safety and health practitioners**

- a) Professional associations
- b) Individual safety, industrial hygiene, and engineering practitioners
- c) Consensus standards groups
- d) Other professionals with safety and health interests

# How the Research Agenda Is Organized

- **Strategic goals** capture the key improvements in occupational safety and health that need to be achieved.
  - Tied to each strategic goal is a **performance measure**, a metric that allows tracking of progress toward that goal.
  - Work groups were formed around each strategic goal, co-chaired by TWU-SC members, to draft intermediate goals to accompany that strategic goal.
- **Intermediate goals** delineate the events that, taken together, contribute to achieving a strategic goal.

# Finalizing the Draft Goals

- The first step in finalizing the draft goals is to seek feedback from the public to ensure that the broadest possible stakeholder input goes into the final product.
- The TWU-SC and involved Corresponding Members will evaluate comments from the key stakeholders in 2008, will revise the draft accordingly.
- Following revision of the draft, the Council will develop an **implementation plan**:
  - detail the concrete actions to be undertaken by stakeholders, including NIOSH, to put the National Agenda for TWU into practice.
- The success of the implementation will of course hinge upon:
  - the level of interest on the part of key players in participating in Agenda activities that will lead to achieving the goals;
  - the extent to which new research partnerships between industry and the research community can be developed;
  - the availability of research funding;
  - the availability of researchers with the necessary expertise.

# Draft TWU Sector Goals

- ✓ **Strategic Goal 1: By 2016, reduce the rate of lost-workday occupational injuries and occupational fatalities in the TWU sector by ...**
- ✓ **Strategic Goal 2: By 2016, reduce incidence and severity of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSD) among workers in the TWU industries by ...**

## Draft TWU Sector Goals, Continued

- ✓ **Strategic Goal 3: By 2016, reduce poor health and premature death among TWU workers by promoting workplace programs and practices that:**
  - ❑ enable workers to engage in healthy behaviors; and
  - ❑ reduce work-related physical and psychological stressors.
- ✓ **Strategic Goal 4: Prevent and reduce occupational hazards, exposures and impacts**

# General Goals Proposed For Inclusion

1. Improve the usefulness of occupational injury research for injury prevention
  - a) Apply appropriate research methods to injury prevention research;
  - b) Encourage multi-disciplinary research to address key research needs;
  - c) Increase use of program evaluation to assess effectiveness of injury prevention initiatives.
2. Increase utilization of Human Performance Management tools to prevent occupational injuries
  - a) Strengthen the effectiveness of: Situational Awareness; Consequential Awareness; Self-Check/Peer-Check; Stop Work Authorization; Pre-job Briefs; Speak-out/Watch-out;
  - b) Strengthen the effectiveness of injury prevention communication activities.
3. Improve organizational culture to strengthen injury prevention
  - a) Develop survey techniques to survey and measure attributes of organizational culture;
  - b) Identify and develop techniques to strengthen organizational culture to improve safety performance;

# General Goals Proposed For Inclusion

(Continued)

4. Improve the effectiveness of safety training
  - a) Understand adult learning techniques and their application to: safety skills training;
    - Refresher training; Awareness-level training;
  - b) Understand training effectiveness for multi-generation workforces.
5. Develop integrated set of injury and workplace health performance measures
  - a) Assess the use of leading-, process-, and lagging <outcome>-measures;
  - b) Strengthen the diagnostic value of integrated performance measures
  - c) Strengthen injury reporting and surveillance techniques.

# Examples of Intermediate Goals

- Implement a surveillance system to better ascertain the nature and extent of occupational injuries among utilities workers.
- Industry will incorporate effective interventions into their policies and procedures to prevent injuries to utilities workers resulting from electrical and chemical burns and from working with energized equipment and tools.
- Industry will incorporate effective interventions into their policies and procedures to prevent injuries to utilities workers resulting from slips, trips and falls from walking working surfaces and falls from elevations.
- Industry will incorporate effective interventions into their policies and procedures to prevent injuries to utilities workers in transportation incidents involving motor vehicles and service trucks.
- Industry will incorporate effective interventions into their policies and procedures to prevent injuries to utilities workers resulting from working with materials.

# Next Steps

- NIOSH and TWU Sector Council will prepare a final draft for stakeholder comment.

# Contact

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