

## INDUSTRIES ANNOUNCE VOLUNTARY INITIATIVE TO REDUCE LEAD EXPOSURE

From U.S. Dept. of Labor

■(WASHINGTON) Two industry organizations have voluntarily lowered lead exposure limits, reducing health hazards to thousands of American workers.

The voluntary lead industry initiative was jointly announced this week by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Lead Industries Association, Inc. (LIA) and the Batter Council International (BCI), the two organizations that developed the program.

"Industry should better protect the health of its own workers," said Robert B. Reich, secretary of labor. "This is exactly the type of initiative and cooperation we want to foster between OSHA and American business."

Representatives of 33 companies, the vast majority of members of the two associations, have agreed to the program. The companies have 20,000 workers in such industries as battery manufacturing, lead smelting, lead chemicals, fabrication using lead, and solder manufacturing. Lead poisoning can have reproductive and neurological effects on workers.

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Joseph A. Dear, who administers OSHA, said the program responds to OSHA's efforts to find ways of improving worker health through voluntary industry action.

"This initiative by the lead industry will contribute to improving the health of exposed workers and to foster an atmosphere of cooperation between the industry and OSHA. OSHA supports its implementation," Dear said.

Robert J. Muth, chairman of the LIA and vice president of ASARCO, Inc., said, "The program represents an effort by the lead industry to take a leadership role in worker protection in cooperation with OSHA."

"Within five years, we aim to have 100 percent of our battery workers' blood lead levels below 40 ug/100g," said Graham G.

Spurling, president of BCI and president and CEO of GNB Technologies. "The industry will aggressively pursue these program objectives because our goal is not just to meet regulations, but to go beyond what's required."

John Baranski, chairman of the BCI Health Committee and vice president of Exide Corp., said, "The program will not be easy to implement and will involve the need for additional resources from the lead industry, including battery companies, but we feel the extra margin of safety provided to employees will justify the effort of those com-

panies participating."

The industry groups will give OSHA annual data indicating the progress made by their members in achieving the target levels set forth in the proposal. The plant-specific data will include pre-proposal baseline data and annual blood lead data and zinc protoporphyrin levels for each work position and work shift monitored. It also will include the number of workers placed on medical removal during the reporting period, the number returned to work during the period, and a brief description of the lead operations performed by reported workers.

## GRANTS TO WORKPLACE LITERACY PARTNERS

From U.S. Dept. of Education

■(WASHINGTON) U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley this week announced the award of \$12.4 million in grants to continue support for 45 projects in 27 states to help workers retool their skills to keep pace with changes in the workplace.

The grants will provide workers with literacy, English as a second language, computation, problem solving and other skills needed to perform job tasks effectively.

"We must ensure that every adult possesses the knowledge and literacy skills needed to succeed in the 21st century," Riley said. "These grants promote continuous learning through local partnerships that enable workers to acquire the job literacy skills that result in new employment, job retention, career advancement and increased productivity."

The grants, for example, have enabled First Chicago Corp., the city's largest employer, to provide some 4,000 employees with basic skills training programs to support quality initiatives and enhance employee performance, service accuracy, timeliness, reliability and customer satisfaction. Employees including clerks in remittance, payroll, research and adjustment, accounts payable and mail distribution have received training to enable them to work in teams and handle more responsibility in response to major technological changes in cash management, administrative functions and bank card processes. Grant funds also will be used to instruct tellers and customer personnel in the basic reading and math skills needed to handle increasingly complex financial services.

Another grant recipient, the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System, is providing customized in-

struction leading to new employment and training opportunities and improved job performance for more than 2,000 workers in manufacturing, health care and electronics employed by 15 of the system's business partners. In addition, the consortium has published source books for workplace learning and a newsletter for workplace learning professionals, produced workplace learning videos and made presentations at conferences attended by workplace education professionals.

The National Workplace Literacy Program awards, authorized by the Adult Education Act, provide funding to partnerships involving at least one educational institution and one business or labor organization. Awards have been made to a variety of partnerships involving state education agencies, local schools, universities, community colleges, businesses, community based organizations, industries, labor unions and private industry councils.

The current awards are for the last year of a three year project period. Originally 18 months in duration, the National Workplace Literacy Program grant awards were lengthened to a three year period to develop and demonstrate work based curriculum and teaching methods, such as simulations and team learning approaches.

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close this gap. "What Works: Fair Pay for Working Women," profiles employers across the country — including states, counties, cities and private employers who have improved pay scales for women (and men) in traditionally female jobs by reducing or eliminating the role of gender and of race in wage-setting.

*"Reformers can be as bigoted and sectarian and as ready to malign each other, as the Church in its darkest periods has been to persecute its dissenters."*

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton—  
speech on "The Kansas Campaign of  
1867"*