

Dragon, Karen E. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

From: Bowers, Mike (CDC harristeeter.com)
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To: NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)
Subject: 244 - Request for Information for the Mid Decade Review of NORA Comments

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Comments

Dr. Anderson has been an incredible asset to retailers with respect to moving the agenda of NORA/NIOSH forward in the retail/wholesale trade sector. Perhaps the most valuable thing that has been accomplished has been the initiation of dialogue between NIOSH and retail trade organizations, such as the Food Marketing Institute and the Retail Industry Leaders Association. Meaningful partnerships take time to develop, but over the last five years, much groundwork has been laid between the government and private sector to stimulate an awareness of occupational safety issues, with Musculoskeletal Disorders being at the forefront of that charge.

Despite the time that has now elapsed, there is still much work left to be done. Specific areas of opportunity include (1) the ongoing engagement of government/retail partnerships, (2) convening additional private sector studies to better understand the causes (and more importantly, solutions) of MSD injuries, (3) the development and publishing of industry-specific best practices, and (4) a public outreach campaign to educate those about to enter the workforce of the value of safety and their responsibilities to avoid injury. The key to success in these endeavors will be the practicality of the approach to change.

I applaud the effort that has been put forth so far, and have witnessed a positive change in the level of awareness on the part of retailers because of what NIOSH has done. The only thing I would caution against is approaching this partnership as a checklist, "once and done" type of scenario. In order for the work to translate into results, it will absolutely require a sustained commitment from government resources. From a safety perspective, many retailers have operated in the status quo for a staggering number of years. Evoking change at the level that is needed will not be expedient, but it will happen as steadily as NIOSH continues to place emphasis on it.