

OSHA restructuring creates small business office

Insurance Times: October 1, 2002, Vol. XXI No. 20

WASHINGTON -- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced a restructuring and realignment of the agency. The reorganization features the creation of a new Office of Small Business, which will be part of an overall change in the agency's structure that for the first time will establish a separate organization in OSHA to coordinate compliance assistance activities.

"The workers in this country, and the businesses and organizations that employ them, deserve the very best performance from OSHA," said John L. Henshaw, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health. "This reorganization realigns our resources and functions around proven strategies that will produce the best results in reducing workplace injuries and illnesses."

The new dedicated compliance assistance organization, the Directorate of Cooperative and State Programs, formalizes OSHA's efforts to expand compliance programs, training, outreach and education programs.

In addition to the new Office of Small Business Assistance, other new offices created by the reorganization include the Office of Partnerships and Recognition and the Office of Outreach Services and Alliances, both designed to reach out to the business and employer communities.

A second feature of the restructuring is the consolidation of the Directorates of Safety and Health Standards into one unified organization that will address both regulatory and non-regulatory approaches for safety and health standards and guidelines. Henshaw said this change streamlines OSHA rulemaking by integrating all safety and health standards development activity within one organization.

The agency will also rename its Directorate of Compliance Programs as the Directorate of Enforcement to clarify and emphasize the strong enforcement that will continue to be pursued under the new restructuring. p