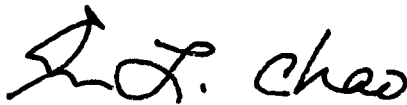


SECRETARY OF LABOR
WASHINGTON

JAN 15 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND
AGENCIES

FROM: ELAINE L. CHAO



SUBJECT: Safety, Health and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) Initiative

To demonstrate his Administration's commitment to worker safety and health, and to reduce the personal and financial cost of accidents in our Federal workplaces, the President has directed the Department of Labor to lead a major new initiative, SHARE, to promote Safety, Health and Return-to-Employment of Federal workers injured on the job.

SHARE is a new, more forward-looking initiative to replace "Federal Worker 2000," an initiative which began in 1999. The critical target areas of SHARE are similar to the goals of Federal Worker 2000. SHARE builds on the successes of the old, and reinforces this Administration's interest in safe and healthful workplaces and costs savings to taxpayers.

The cost of federal workplace injuries, when measured by workers' compensation losses, exceeds two billion dollars annually. In Fiscal Year 2003, the nearly 2.7 million federal employees filed more than 168,000 new workers' compensation claims, which resulted in over two million days lost from work. Even these striking numbers do not include the pain and inconvenience suffered by injured workers, and in many cases, the profound disruption of their lives. Nor do they count the losses in productivity, diminished responsiveness, and quality of service to the taxpayer because of diverted resources and lost workdays.

The President has directed all Executive Branch departments and agencies to participate in SHARE for three years, beginning with FY 2004. The Department will measure and report agencies' progress in four critical areas against their performance in the baseline year FY 2003, and will assist agencies in meeting their annual goals in each area.

The President asks that we set goals in the following areas:

- % Reduction in total case rates for injuries and illnesses
- % Reduction in case rates for lost time injuries and illnesses
- % Improvement of the timeliness of filing notices of injury and illness
- % Reduction in the rates of lost production days due to injuries and illnesses.

We believe that it is reasonable for the government as a whole to accomplish at least the following: reduce total injury case rates and lost time case rates by 3% each per year; increase the timely filing of claims by 5% per year; and reduce the rate of lost production days due to injury by 1% each year.

We know that some agencies have set more challenging goals for themselves, and indeed, many agencies can make greater strides in accomplishing these objectives. To accommodate these variations, the President has asked that each agency work with the Department of Labor to set for itself challenging annual targets for the three years of the initiative. By January 30, 2004, each agency should notify John L. Henshaw, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health (202-693-2000) of its annual targets for the three years of the initiative in each of the four measures. Department of Labor staff in our Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Office of Workers' Compensation Programs will provide baseline performance data, assist in goal-setting, and work with you and your staffs during the year as you evaluate your status, adopt strategies to meet your targets, and check your progress.

As Federal agencies organize and function to ensure our security at home and abroad, we must maintain our focus on improving worker safety and health, reducing the costs of workplace injuries and illnesses and enhancing workforce productivity. As the President stated, many if not all, workplace injuries and illnesses can be avoided.

We at the Department are inspired and energized by the President's commitment to improve workplace safety and health beginning with our own establishments. I am completely committed to improving the Federal workplace by achieving the goals of SHARE, and I look forward to working with each of you to achieve these critical results.