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SPALW Newsletter

(Safety Professionals & the Latino Workforce)

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Safety
Professionals
And the
Latino
Workforce

See You in Las Vegas!

Bienvenidos and welcome to our third newsletter! We look forward to seeing you at Safety 2008 in Las Vegas, NV next month. We invite you to attend the SPALW Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday, June 10, 2008 at the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel. This next meeting promises to be valuable, productive and fun. You will have the opportunity to:

- Celebrate the successes that we have accomplished since our last annual meeting
- Help us set local and international goals for the future of SPALW
- Hear guest speaker NIOSH Director Dr. John Howard speak on Latino issues
- Network with other likeminded safety professionals who can provide you with ideas and who can assist you with your workplace challenges

Guest Speaker: Dr. John Howard

During our Advisory Committee meeting, NIOSH Director Dr. John Howard will share his experience with safety and the Spanish-speaking workforce as well as NIOSH's most recent ideas, concerns and solutions in this area.

Networking Opportunity

Join us for a networking gathering after the Advisory Committee meeting. Learn about SPALW and meet other safety professionals. Ask questions and get answers and resources to help you when working with your Spanish-speaking employees.

SPALW is growing due to the many benefits it has to offer its membership with resources for safety and accident prevention in both Spanish and English. SPALW not only provides resources to national members in the U.S., it reaches and supports members at an international/global level. For SPALW to continue to grow successfully, your involvement is needed. Any ASSE member can volunteer to join us at any time. If interested, please contact me or visit our homepage at <http://www.asse.org/practicespecialties/spalw/index.php>.



By Hector M. Escarcega, CSP, ARM
SPALW Chair

SPALW to Meet During Safety 2008

The SPALW Advisory Committee will meet on Tuesday, June 10, 2008 from 6:00-8:30 p.m. in Conference Room 3 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel. All SPALW members are invited to attend.

For more information, contact Hector Escarcega at hectorescarcega@aol.com.

SPALW Spotlight: Diana Cortez



This is the first in a series of interviews with SPALW members.

Diana Cortez also designed the SPALW flier and banner for Safety 2008 in Las Vegas, NV.

What is your name and where do you live?

My name is Diana Cortez. I live in Millwood, NY, which is located in upper Westchester County.

What three things can always be found in your refrigerator?

You can always find milk, orange juice and eggs in my refrigerator.

People would be surprised to know that I...

Love music and dancing, particularly country, salsa and merengue, and love songs too.

What is your occupation?

I work for the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Our mission is to assure safe and healthful working conditions for all working men and women. Our goal is that all workers return home safe and sound after a day's work. Our vision is to have an effective safety and health management system in every workplace in America.

I am the Area Director of the OSHA Tarrytown Area Office located in Westchester County, NY. My jurisdiction covers the Bronx, Westchester and Rockland Counties. I am responsible for all OSHA programs within my jurisdiction, including enforcement, outreach, training and cooperative programs. Our cooperative programs include alliances, partnerships and voluntary protection programs.

I have a staff of 12 Compliance Safety and Health Officers and one Compliance Assistance Specialist as well as two Assistant Area Directors and an administrative staff.

The Tarrytown Area Office strives to provide the best quality service to our constituents through our strong enforcement actions, our active outreach and training activities and our alliances with a variety of groups, including community, professional, labor and employers.

Additionally, I am the Regional Hispanic Coordinator for Region II, which covers New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In this role, I am responsible for coordinating all Hispanic outreach and training

activities and for developing alliances and partnerships with community and faith-based organizations as well as professional, educational and labor organizations and employer groups. Through these activities, we strive to develop working relationships to provide information and training to the Hispanic community on workplace hazards and preventive measures to reduce injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the workplace.

How long have you worked in the SH&E profession?

I have worked in the SH&E profession for 28 years.

Why did you choose this career?

This is a career where I directly impact others. I have the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives every day. I save lives! I am absolutely devoted to my job, and I love to get up in the morning and go to work.

How long have you been a member of ASSE, and in what activities have you been involved during this time?

I have been an ASSE member since 1989. During this time, I have given presentations at meetings, met and shared experiences with other SH&E professionals, presented at ASSE's annual professional development conference and developed an alliance with the ASSE Metro chapter to provide information and training to Hispanic and young workers. Through the alliance, ASSE members have sponsored training seminars, donated personal protective equipment for trainees and volunteered as trainers. Together, we have provided the OSHA 10-hour course to hundreds of workers and have participated in many safety fairs and conferences throughout New York and New Jersey.

What other contributions have you made to the SH&E profession?

Working with other SH&E professionals, I have formed a group of volunteers to provide pro bono safety and health training to workers who otherwise would not have the necessary information/knowledge and skills to prevent workplace accidents.

The volunteers are grateful to be part of these outreach efforts and find it extremely rewarding to teach others to work safely in a group effort to reduce workplace accidents. Anyone who would like to join this training effort should contact me or call their local area office. Visit www.osha.gov for a listing of local area offices, Compliance Assistant Specialists and Hispanic Coordinators.

What made you decide to become involved in the SPALW Advisory Committee?

To share my knowledge, experience and skills with other SH&E professionals and to increase awareness of the need to develop and implement SH&E programs tailored to fit diversity in the workplace.

What concerns, problems or issues face SH&E professionals who work with the Hispanic workforce?

Two major concerns are:

1. The ability to effectively communicate with each other due to differences in language and literacy levels.
2. Many times, cultural differences lead to misinterpretation of directions and intent. Hard feelings can occur with a loss in rapport and trust.

Diana Cortez may be contacted at cortez.diana@dol.gov.

SPALW Goes to Mexico City



SPALW and ASSE participated in Mexico City's first Safety Expo from April 21-24, 2008.



SPALW Chair Hector Escarcega preparing to represent ASSE at the Mexico City Safety Expo

SPALW and ASSE exhibited at the expo, during which vendors gave safety presentations in both English and Spanish. Hector Escarcega, SPALW Chair, was pleased to meet so many people interested in joining ASSE and SPALW.



From left to right: Raul Gutierrez (Banda Group International Consulting), Adolfo Reynaga (Banda Group International Consulting), Hector Escarcega (Bilingual Solutions International), Dave Wagner (ASSE Membership Manager), Roberto Minjares (ASSE International Member, ASSE Mexico City Chapter Representative) & José Ochoa (Banda Group International Consulting).

While in Mexico City, SPALW and ASSE solidified the beginnings of an ASSE Chapter in Mexico. Specifically, SPALW and ASSE will work with Roberto Minjares, PCS, ASP of Minjares and Associates in Hermosillo, Mexico. Minjares is working closely with Escarcega and ASSE Membership Manager Dave Wagner to increase membership for both ASSE and SPALW and to provide safety professionals in Mexico with the benefits of ASSE and SPALW.



ASSE/SPALW members Adolfo Renaga & Roberto Minjares discuss the benefits of joining ASSE and SPALW



Roberto Minjares & Dave Wagner

Escarcega also presented a 10-hour OSHA General Industry course during the Safety Expo. Twenty-seven people participated in this first-of-a-kind event. Escarcega was pleased to see a high level of interest in OSHA and its standards, particularly in the areas of construction and general industry.



Hector Escarcega



OSHA 10-Hour Course Participants



OSHA 10-Hour Course Participants



ASSE/SPALW Representatives & GIPREX President George Fletcher



Hector Escarcega & GIPREX Account Executive Jurgen Oliver

Safety 2008 to Feature Sessions of Interest to Latino Workforce

ASSE's *Safety 2008*, to be held from June 9-12, 2008 in Las Vegas, NV, will include the following sessions of interest to the Latino workforce:

530 How to Implement a Behavior-Based Auditing Program for Your Spanish-Speaking Workforce

569 La fuerza laboral Latina en España y EEUU

615 Are You Prepared to Effectively Train Your Hispanic Workers?

620 Resistencia Antimicrobiana: MRSA

633 Establishing an OSHA Outreach Training Program in Latin-America: A Case Study in Quito, Ecuador

669 Cuasi-Accidentes: Que Significan Para La Gerencia?

702 Bridging Cultural Differences

710 How to Develop an Effective Safety Program for Your Spanish-Speaking Workforce

744 Como comunicar y trabajar con su trabajadores Latinos: Tumbando las Barreras Culturales y abriendo el camino de Comunicación

For more information on these or other sessions, visit <http://www.asse.org/education/pdc08/concurrent-sessions.php>.

Truman College Professor Receives Grant to Conduct Study in Spain

Professor David Sanchez of Truman College in Chicago, IL has received a grant to conduct the following study in Spain.

The Latino Workforce in Spain & in the U.S.: Present Situation & Programs Designed to Address their Workplace Safety

Study Description

While the presence of a Latino workforce is well known here in the U.S., it is also very prominent in Europe.

Spain, with its 14% immigrant workforce, ranks as one of the top world countries with largest immigrant populations percentage-wise.

From 2000-2005, Spain was the second country in the world after the U.S. in reception of immigrants and the first in rate of immigrants per nationals. Spain also has the largest Latino workforce (people from Latin American countries such as Mexico, Central America, South America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, etc.) in all of Europe, representing almost half of the country's immigrant population.

The Spanish government, following European Union policies, has developed a specific agenda to address the Latino labor force regarding workplace safety issues. Government labor unions and other organizations manage different programs to address fatalities, injuries and illnesses among Latino workers.

What educational background do Latino workers have in Spain? What types of jobs do they do? What work-related accidents do they most commonly suffer? What types of preventive programs exist and what are their results? What types of barriers do they face? This study will be divided into three parts.

Part I

Part I will present the measures Spain has taken to reduce work-related fatalities and accidents among immigrants. The work relationship between Truman College and Spain's INSHT (OSHA equivalent) and Spain's two largest labor unions (UGT and CCOO) gives Truman College the opportunity to access Spain's accident prevention models used to analyze and evaluate accidents, injuries and fatalities among Latino workers.

Workers will also be interviewed to gain a better understanding of their point of view when it comes to workplace safety while working in the field.

Part 2

Part 2 will analyze the differences between Spain's accident prevention models and those used in the U.S. It will examine and compare workplace-related safety statistics, safety programs and results, and it will focus on how determinant cultural aspects and language barriers are in work-related accidents.

Latinos in the U.S. continue to disproportionately experience workplace safety issues, accounting for 16% of workplace deaths in the country (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Part 3

Part 3 will present results, conclusions and suggestions/recommendations to improve safety and health for Latinos in the workplace.

Training Methodologies & Their Effectiveness

By David Sanchez

"One of the main ways of improving work safety is by communicating with employees in the language they understand." John Henshaw, Past OSHA Administrator

This article presents and analyzes the results of a needs analysis conducted to shed light on the different aspects of the present status of workplace safety and health training for the Latino workforce in Chicago, IL.

The article also examines the prevalence of workplace safety and health training, training methodologies used with Latino workers and the effectiveness of those methodologies.

A total of 500 Latino workers employed in the services, construction and manufacturing industries in Chicago were surveyed.

The surveyed workers were older than 18 years old and included both males and females with the important characteristics that they were born outside of the U.S.

These workers came from different companies or were unemployed and job searching. They also lacked English skills. This population was chosen because, as statistics have reflected, the Latino population is the most vulnerable regarding workplace safety.

Workplace Safety & Health Training

We analyzed:

- The time the surveyed workers have been employed by their present employer
- If they have ever been trained in workplace safety and health
- The length of the training
- Their knowledge of basic workplace safety and health concepts

Conclusions

- General knowledge is very poor both for trained and untrained workers.
- Trained employees were more successful in demonstrating a basic knowledge of workplace safety and health concepts. However, they do not demonstrate to be significantly more knowledgeable than those who have not received training. For that reason, it can be inferred that the training methodologies used are ineffective. Less than 50% of trained employees had heard of OSHA.

- Employees who have not received training are better able to identify their workplace risks. This may mean that during training, not enough guidance about risk detection and prevention is provided.
- Service employees are not familiar with lockout/tagout processes because they do not apply to them. Only 21% of manufacturing-trained employees knew about lockout/tagout procedures.
- Knowledge about work-related illnesses is very low.

Training Methodologies & Their Effectiveness

In this section, we analyze the language in which the employees were trained, the training methodologies used and the effectiveness of each.

1. Oral presentation in English & English Training Material. The training is ineffective when participants have a medium or low English level or are not familiar with labor health and safety in the workplace.

2. Videos in English about Workplace Safety.

Effectiveness is even lower than the previous methodology due to the difficulty in understanding spoken English in the video.

3. Translated Training Material (No Presentation).

The effectiveness is low as a result of poor translations from English and inappropriate graphic designs.

4. Training Videos in Spanish. Low effectiveness because these training videos are regularly based on general information, without specific or relevant knowledge of their own workplace.

5. Oral Presentation in Spanish (No Materials).

Training is effective when it is delivered by a labor safety professional. However, training effectiveness is low when it is delivered by a Spanish speaker who lacks the appropriate labor safety knowledge.

6. Oral Presentation in Spanish & Training Materials in Spanish. This is an effective training methodology to retain safety and health concepts. However, it does not help to learn workplace safety and health terminology in English.

7. Oral Presentation in English & Spanish

Interpreter. It is common to have an interpreter that is not specialized in the safety area. This is not the most effective way because much of the technical language and terminology is lost by the time it reaches the participants, and it inhibits participant input.

8. Oral Presentation in Spanish & English Material.

Since employees do not dominate the English language, the training material is not used for future references, thus reducing the effectiveness of training.

9. Oral Presentation in English & Training Material in Spanish. Usually, there is little class participation due to the participants' low English level and low understanding of the concepts presented.

10. Oral Presentation in Spanish & Bilingual Training Materials. It allows the effective understanding of concepts, participants' interaction in the classroom and knowledge of key terminology in English. However, this is the least-used methodology.

Conclusions

- Even though the basic knowledge of workplace safety and health is very low for all groups, it is evident that the most effective methodologies were those that delivered training in Spanish bilingually.
- Forty-eight percent of the employees who received training in Spanish went through an oral presentation but did not receive training materials in Spanish. Of those who received bilingual training, 42% received bilingual training by means of a translator without obtaining any type of handouts in English or Spanish.

Online Training Methodologies

As part of our needs analysis, we also focused on computer skills with the following results.

Based on this information, for safety training to be successful, it cannot be delivered using the latest online and computer-based technologies. Computer technologies would actually be very ineffective given the computer skill level of this population.

Government's Efforts to Address Workplace Safety Issues Faced by the Latino Workforce

OSHA has mounted a significant effort to reach out to Spanish-speaking workers and their employers. The agency formed a special taskforce in October 2001 to examine the issue of rising Hispanic worker fatalities and what it should do to address the problem. The taskforce is examining:

- Sharing best practices
- Expanding outreach
- Determining where more information is necessary

OSHA's current outreach efforts to the Latino workforce include:

- New Spanish language page on OSHA's website
- New Spanish language option on OSHA's 1-800 number
- Numerous Spanish translations and new publications
- Spanish version of the 10-hour construction training delivered regularly in Texas

- Collaborative effort working with the Catholic Church in New York
- Construction Accident Reduction Emphasis (CARE) program in Atlanta with special focus on reducing Latino fatalities
- Liaison with the Mexican Consulate in several cities
- National alliance with the Latino Contractors of America
- Working arrangements with police and emergency responders to notify OSHA when fatalities occur
- Participation in new Texas Justice and Equality in the Workplace Program, the first of its kind to protect rights and to promote safety of Latino workers
- Co-sponsorship and participation at the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce meeting in 2001
- Susan Harwood grants awarded Hispanic outreach programs in Alabama, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Texas, Maryland and California
- Radio and television public service announcements in Spanish about safety issues
- Active recruitment of Spanish-speaking employees to add to the 180 who already work for OSHA
- Use of focus groups to determine how best to reach Spanish-speaking workers and their employers with job safety and health information.
- Collection of new data when investigating fatalities to determine the role language and country of origin play in accidents

State of Illinois: Panel on Latino Workforce Injuries & Fatalities (September 2005)

Concerned about the high and increasing injury and fatality rate among immigrant Latino workers, the state of Illinois' governor's office appointed a panel of government officials, local community advocates, union representatives and occupational health specialists to develop recommendations to improve job safety for Illinois' Latino workers.

The top five recommendations included:

1. Create a worker safety fund to support collaborative outreach to Latino workers, develop worker safety materials in Spanish and provide health and safety training in Spanish.
2. Relocate the onsite safety and health consultation team to the U.S. Department of Labor.
3. Strengthen and amend the existing Day Labor Act.
4. Coordinate a statewide data collection system to help centralize and analyze occupational injury, illness and fatality data.
5. Support further reforms to the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act.

Metodologías actuales de entrenamiento en Seguridad Laboral y su efectividad

Por David Sanchez

"Uno de los factores principales al mejorar la seguridad del trabajador es comunicarse en el idioma que ellos pueden entender." John Henshaw, OSHA administrador pasado.

En este apartado se representan los datos obtenidos a partir de un análisis de necesidades realizado donde se pretendía conocer el estado actual de la población laboral latina en cuanto a su entrenamiento en Seguridad Laboral así como qué metodologías se están empleando para su entrenamiento y cual es la eficacia.

Para ello se ha realizado un sondeo sobre un total de 200 empleados latinos del área de Chicago pertenecientes a distintas empresas encuadradas dentro en los sectores: Servicios, Construcción y Manufactura.

La población entrevistada se corresponde con trabajadores mayores de 18 años de ambos sexos y que han nacido fuera de EEUU. El grupo de personas encuestadas están formado principalmente por trabajadores de distintas compañías y que podemos considerar como altamente vulnerables a sufrir accidentes laborales al no disponer de destrezas suficientes para comprender el idioma inglés.

Entrenamiento en Seguridad Laboral

En esta primera sección se analiza el tiempo que han trabajado en EEUU y si han sido entrenados en seguridad laboral, qué tiempo duró su entrenamiento y qué conocimiento tienen sobre algunos conceptos básicos de seguridad laboral.

Los resultados obtenidos han sido los siguientes:
Número de empleados entrevistados: 500

Las preguntas planteadas hacían referencia a los siguientes tópicos:

- Conocer si estaban familiarizados con OSHA
- Plan de emergencia
- Hojas de datos de sustancias químicas
- Enfermedades laborales de transmisión
- Candado y etiqueta. Lockout/tagout
- Equipos de protección individual
- Identificación de riesgos

Conclusiones

- De forma general destacar que el nivel de conocimientos es muy pobre.
- Se puede observar que los empleados entrenados tienen mayor conocimiento de las preguntas planteadas, frente a los no entrenados, sin ser estas unas diferencias considerables, luego nos puede decir que la metodología del entrenamiento no es muy efectiva.
- De acuerdo con las respuestas obtenidas a la cuestión 4 se puede resaltar que los conocimientos referentes a enfermedades laborales son muy bajos
- En cuanto a la pregunta número 5 puede ser entendible que empleados del sector servicios no estén muy familiarizados con el procedimiento de candado y etiqueta, pero solamente un 21% de los trabajadores de manufactura entrenados supieron de ese procedimiento.
- Destacar que referente a la pregunta número 7, los empleados que no han recibido entrenamiento han sido capaces de detectar mejor los potenciales riesgos que pueden aparecer en sus puestos de trabajo. Esto nos puede dar ha entender que durante el entrenamiento no se adiestra suficientemente en la detección de riesgos y sus medidas preventivas.

Metodología y Efectividad

En este apartado se representa el idioma en el que recibieron el entrenamiento los empleados, qué metodologías se emplearon y cuales son los resultados de efectividad de acuerdo con la metodología usada.

Clase oral + documentación en inglés. No es eficaz cuando los asistentes tienen un nivel bajo o medio de inglés y además no están familiarizados con la seguridad y salud laboral.

Video en inglés sobre seguridad. La eficacia es incluso más baja que el punto anterior al ser más difícil su comprensión.

Documentación en español. Poca efectividad al tratarse generalmente de textos mal traducidos del inglés y sin un diseño apropiado.

Video en español. Poca efectividad ya que son videos de información general, lo cual no les proporciona información específica del puesto de trabajo en el que están empleados.

Clase oral en español. Es efectiva cuando es presentada por un profesional en seguridad laboral. Pierde eficacia cuando se utiliza a una persona con dominio de español pero sin conocimiento de seguridad laboral.

Clase oral + documentación en español. Es una metodología positiva en cuanto a la retención de los

conceptos, pero no ayuda al aprendizaje de la terminología técnica en Inglés.

Clase oral inglés + intérprete. La utilización de un traductor no especializado en el área de seguridad es la práctica más común, pero a su vez no es la más efectiva, al no favorecer el diálogo por parte de los asistentes.

Clase oral español + documentación en inglés. Se pierde efectividad en cuanto al uso de la documentación por parte del empleado que al estar en un idioma que no domina raramente consultará en un futuro.

Clase oral inglés + documentación español. Generalmente no se produce intercambio de opiniones por parte de los asistentes, al no dominar el idioma.

Clase oral español + documentación bilingüe. Permite el intercambio de opiniones dentro del salón y facilita al empleado el entendimiento de los conceptos en inglés. Permite a la vez realizar un plan de seguimiento efectivo. A pesar de ser todas estas ventajas es una mitología que no se detectó durante el estudio.

Conclusiones

- Considerando que el nivel de respuestas correctamente contestadas es muy bajo, sin embargo se puede observar que aquellos empleados que más retención han demostrado son aquellos que han recibido el entrenamiento en español o bilingüe.
- Haciendo mención a las metodologías utilizadas, aquellos empleados que recibieron entrenamiento en español, un 48% de estos recibieron una clase oral en español sin documentación, mientras que los que recibieron el entrenamiento bilingüe, un 42% de estos la recibieron mediante traductor sin recibir ninguna documentación.

Metodología de entrenamiento online

Durante el análisis de necesidades realizado, también se hizo énfasis en las habilidades relacionadas con computación obteniéndose el siguiente resultado: Estos datos nos pueden dar a entender que basar las acciones de mejora de información y entrenamiento de Seguridad Laboral en el desarrollo de programas bajo el entorno tecnológico, tanto vía on line como con el uso de software, no va a tener la efectividad deseada sobre aquella parte de la población laboral considerada como la más vulnerable al no disponer de las destrezas necesarias para el manejo de computadoras.

Acciones del gobierno sobre la fuerza laboral latina
Los esfuerzos de OSHA para introducir el español en la formación de los trabajadores de habla hispana son considerables, entre los que se pueden destacar:

- Website de OSHA en español
- Traducciones al español de algunos de los temas de formación
- Colaboración con el consulado de Méjico en diversas ciudades de U.S.
- Alianza nacional con la Cámara de Contratantes Hispanos de U.S.
- Esponsor del forum Hispánico de seguridad celebrado en San Diego
- Participación en la Cámara de Comercio Hispana
- Ayudas para la formación a través del programa Susan Harwood
- Anuncios en español, sobre seguridad, a través de los medios de comunicación
- Fomentar grupos de trabajo para determinar formas eficaces de transmitir información sobre seguridad a la fuerza laboral hispanohablante

Estado de Illinois: Panel de accidentes y enfermedades sufridos por los trabajadores latinos. (Septiembre 2005)

La oficina del gobernador de Illinois, consciente de el incremento de los índices de accidentabilidad entre los trabajadores latinos, reunió en un panel a oficiales del gobierno, líderes comunitarios, representantes sindicales y especialistas en seguridad laboral, con el fin de encontrar recomendaciones que sirvieran para la mejora de la seguridad en el trabajo de los trabajadores Latinos.

Las cinco recomendaciones consideradas como prioritarias fueron:

1. Creación de un fondo económico que sirviera de apoyo para el reclutamiento de trabajadores latinos y el desarrollo de materiales de entrenamiento en español y su impartición.
2. Reorganizar el servicio de consultoría de seguridad y llevarlo a depender del departamento de trabajo.
3. Reforzar el existente Day Labor Act.
4. Coordinar a nivel estatal la recopilación de estadísticas referntes a la accidentabilidad de trabajadores.
5. Apoyar los cambios y reformas sobre el Workers' Compensation Act.

Construction & Agricultural Migrant Workers' Health & Safety Issues in the U.S.

By Michael W. Thompson, ASSE President

Background

The United Nations' definition of migrant workers is very broad and essentially includes anyone working outside of their home country. In some countries, notably the

U.S., the term has a specific connotation that the work will be low-paid. The term can also be used to describe someone who migrates within a country, possibly their own, to pursue seasonal work.

In the "new" U.S. labor force, 1 in 2 are foreign-born. The U.S.'s high net immigration poses significant challenges for SH&E professionals.

A vast majority of migrant workers are from Mexico and other Latin American countries. The U.S. government calls them Hispanics, while these individuals from the many countries prefer to call themselves Latinos. It is estimated that nearly 14 million live here.

Many migrant workers are more than capable of looking after themselves. These workers have the power of their education, their profession and their earning power to ensure a good life for themselves.

The concern for safety and health of migrant workers is toward those at a more vulnerable level, those in the dirty, dangerous and demanding jobs, which native U.S. workers in the modern age do not want. For those in this category of employment, it is more difficult to face issues associated with occupational safety and health due to language, cultural differences and discrimination.

My comments are strictly focused on occupational safety and health and are not intended to pass judgment on the issues of legal versus illegal immigration or political viewpoints and policy concerns. At ASSE, our professional code of ethics requires us to perform our duty to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for all workers, and this includes migrant workers.

The Migrant Path Today

The estimated 14 million migrant workers in the U.S. follow three general streams or paths of migration:

1. In the East, workers begin in Florida and travel North through Ohio, New York and Maine, following crops that range from citrus to tobacco to blueberries.
2. The Midwestern stream begins in Southern Texas and flows north through every state in the Midwest.
3. Workers in the West begin their season in southern California and follow the coast to Washington State or veer eastward inland to North Dakota.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) estimates suggest that approximately 1.3 million U.S. citizens migrate annually between states, earning their living by working in the agricultural industry. Agriculture by far remains the largest employer of these migrant workers followed by construction.

DOL's [National Agricultural Workers Survey](#) gives a snapshot of today's migrant workers. Its findings include the following:

- 88% are men, and many of them are in the U.S. on their own so they can send money back to families in their home countries.
- 55% are married. Of those, 71% do not live with their spouses.
- Their mean age is 31. Many begin the migrant life in their early 20s and return to their home countries within a few years to live in the homes built with U.S. money. They may return to the U.S. several more times before they are too old to work such hard jobs.
- On average, they have a sixth-grade education.
- 93% are foreign-born, up from 88% ten years ago.
- 65% are here illegally, up from 62% 10 years ago.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 5,703 people lost their lives on the job in 2006, and this continues a long-term downward trend. However, while overall workplace fatalities are falling, deaths among migrant (Latino in particular) workers are rising. The service and agricultural industries account for most of the increases on top of increases in earlier years in construction. Although Latino workers in construction represent about 18% of the workforce, they account for 21% of the deaths on the job.

Migrant worker education rates are much lower than the national average. Health is undermined by hard outdoor labor and exposure to pesticides. Agriculture is the second most dangerous occupation in the U.S. The Farm Worker Health Services Program reports:

1. Average life expectancy is substantially lower than the national life expectancy rate of the U.S. population.
2. 61% of all farm workers have incomes below the poverty level. The median income of farm worker families has remained less than \$10,000.

Many agricultural workers live in labor camps or overcrowded apartments or motels. Others spend time living in their cars, in tents, in the fields, along riverbanks or in caves. In such circumstances, they often lack access to potable water or face excessive exposure to dust, pesticides and other contaminants. These living conditions adversely affect the health of migrant workers and their families. For example, living in dilapidated, overcrowded or substandard conditions puts migrant farm workers at risk for infectious diseases (e.g., tuberculosis or hepatitis) as well as illnesses associated

with environmental health hazards (e.g., lead or pesticide poisoning, asthma, giardia, etc.).

It is difficult to gain clear and concise data on occupational safety and health issues facing migrant workers, as recordkeeping is a problem and any data gathered is incomplete and not always verifiable.

Many organizations in addition to government departments dedicate resources to gathering and analyzing data on injuries and illnesses for these workers, but it is incomplete and sporadic.

DOL's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) administers and enforces comprehensive labor laws, associated with the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA). Federal and state OSHA programs have jurisdiction for OSH.

Examples of Multidimensional Actions to Bring OSH Focus to Migrant Workers

Migrant workers' rights and their right to a work environment free from known hazards have been a subject of concern, debate, conflict, labour union organization and solutions for decades. Various migrant worker programs have been formed by trade unions, employers groups, sovereign nations, U.S. state and federal government departments and agencies and community groups.

The Mexican government has brought focus through its 49 Mexican consulates working with the U.S. to provide outreach, training and assistance specifically to Mexican workers but also to other Latino workers in the U.S.

All 50 states struggle with migrant worker safety and health issues. An example is Washington State. The Bill WA 5723 "Community Agricultural Worker Safety Grant Program," creates and funds the community agricultural worker safety and health grant program and provides grant recipients with money to provide training for the state's agricultural workers in tractor and farm machinery skills and safety, pesticide training, adult basic skills, civics, English as a second language, commercial drivers' licensing and other related topics. Recipients may receive up to \$250,000 per year.

At the federal level, many approaches are taken to address health and safety for migrant workers:

- A taskforce has been created to identify steps to reduce injuries, illnesses and deaths among migrant Latino workers.
- An extensive Spanish page on OSHA's website, www.osha.gov, proved very popular. In the first nine months, more than 200,000 visits were made to this page with an average of 22,000 visits per month.

- Safety and health publications and many more fact sheets have been translated into Spanish and distributed.
- A Spanish-language option has been added on their toll-free help line at 1-800-321-OSHA.
- Radio public service announcements have been created in Spanish. It is estimated that over 15 million listeners have heard these messages.
- OSHA has added more bilingual staff members and has recruited more Spanish-speaking staff.
- OSHA has appointed Latino coordinators for its ten regional offices.
- OSHA has assembled a glossary of more than 200 useful safety and health terms in English and Spanish.

On the subject of training and education:

- OSHA offers safety and health training in Spanish at 20 education centers with 35 sites and 1,300 Latino trainers.
- Spanish-speaking trainers have in turn trained, in their native language nearly 17,000 Latino workers.

Under the Susan B. Harwood Federal Training Grant Program, 50 nonprofit groups provide training or develop training materials. Examples of what training grantees offer Spanish-speaking workers and employers are as follows:

- International Society of Arboriculture—an interactive CD-ROM on safe work practices for tree care.
- Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union in New York City—safety training for poultry processing workers.
- University of Massachusetts Lowell Research Foundation—a Spanish version of the OSHA 10-hour construction outreach training program.

Outreach & Communication Efforts

Communication is a major issue. Because of their often vulnerable position socially, legally and educationally, safety and health is often not a priority for these workers.

One must ensure that migrants and all workers understand the situation from an occupational safety and health perspective. Information must be made available in a form in which it can be understood. Trade unions, employers groups, government departments and

agencies and community groups have provided many successful programs to migrant workers.

Partnerships and alliances through trade unions and private organizations provide information, guidance and access to training resources to protect the health and safety of migrant workers in the construction, meat-processing and agricultural industries.

For example, construction partnerships include components that focus on sharing safety and health information in Spanish. Ten national alliances and 31 regional alliances focus on reaching Latino workers and businesses on issues such as ergonomics, motor vehicle safety, amputations, falls and work zone safety.

Much of what has been learned in the U.S. has come from community groups. Outreach is a major tool used effectively in the U.S. Family days, soap operas with occupational safety and health messages, Spanish-language television and formal alliances provide education and training.

Pictograms set out good practice, while language translations for agriculture workers are used in varying degrees.

Steve Franklin's recent *Chicago Tribune* article, "Uncertain Safety for Latino Workers," raised to new awareness levels the importance of workplace safety.

ASSE continues to highlight the issue of safety within the migrant worker community.

1. The Safety Professionals and the Latino Workforce (SPALW) Common Interest Group provides an arena for safety directors, managers, supervisors, consultants and others to discuss, research, develop and implement suggestions and recommendations for issues and solutions related to the Latino workforce and safety.

SPALW members can network and provide those interested in safety efforts for the Latino workforce ongoing support and resources through existing and new strategies. They help those entering the SH&E profession and provide opportunities for one-on-one support through a mentoring program in both English and Spanish.

2. ASSE members work for companies, cities and counties that not only offer Spanish and English classes in person and online, but also offer free daycare so that workers can take advantage of these and additional safety training courses.

3. Occupational safety and health education sessions are offered in Spanish at ASSE's annual professional development conference.

4. Members can participate in webinars on topics related to safety and health within the Latino workforce.

5. SPALW provides a listserv and a triannual electronic newsletter. The group also meets annually at ASSE's annual professional development conference.

6. SPALW members attended a safety conference in April in Mexico City where they discussed Latino worker safety and its impact on the U.S. and Mexico labor forces.

Conclusion

Migrant worker issues have a range of other problems wider than occupational safety and health, but an occupational safety and health solution will contribute to overall worker welfare due to the percentage of life spent at work and other attendant influences.

Migrant worker safety and health injury and illness data indicates that about 25% of the fatalities are in some way related to language or cultural barriers. We know that migrant workers are at greater risk by taking dangerous, labor-intensive, low-paying jobs with little or no safety training.

We know that, due to cultural differences, safety practices of migrant workers' native countries may not be as strong as in the U.S. Further, these workers may not understand the protections to which they are entitled or trust governmental agencies to act on their behalf.

Migrants make a significant contribution to the U.S. economy, it should not be at a cost to them in terms of poor working conditions leading to accidents.

The U.S. economy needs these workers because of economic development and demographic factors. The economy can face an uncertain future if these workers are not available. Of course, these workers also need protection. By working together, we can find more effective ways to ensure the safety and health of migrant workers. They deserve our very best.