State of Alaska
Department of Labor
Division of Labor Standards and Safety

DOSH Program Directive 90 - 7

Date: September 14, 1990

To: ALL OSH STAFF

From: Tom Stuart, Director

Subject: Information Dissemination System for Ergonomic Inspections and Consultative Visits Resulting in Significant Benefits

A. Purpose. This DOSH Program Directive (PD) establishes procedures for collecting and disseminating information relative to ergonomic inspections and ergonomic consultative visits which have resulted in significant benefits to employers and their employees.

B. Background. Federal OSHA has initiated a program for certain ergonomic hazards. Valuable data relative to hazard identification and control are collected and placed in the case files including ergonomic solutions for specific operations. This potentially valuable information is rarely shared with employers, employees, and other interested groups. This PD is intended to provide the mechanism for the collection and dissemination of ergonomic solutions within OSHA and State OSH programs and to interested parties and organizations outside of OSHA and OSH State Programs.

C. Procedures.

1. The Chief of Compliance and the Chief of Consultation and Training will be responsible for the development of brief, written summaries for selected ergonomic cases and ergonomic consultative visits. The Chief of Compliance will prepare this summary for enforcement inspections that result in ergonomic cases and the Chief of Consultation and Training will prepare the summary for ergonomic consultative visits. All information WHICH IS A TRADE SECRET OR OTHERWISE CONFIDENTIAL must be removed from the summary report. (The format to be used for this summary and an example of a summary are attached to this PD.)

2. After an ergonomic inspection or visit has been completed, the Chief of Compliance or Chief of Consultation and Training, as appropriate, will write the summary and forward it to the Deputy Director. The summary shall include the following elements:

a. A short paragraph analyzing the hazard(s) identified, giving the apparent cause and related factors contributing to the existence of the hazard(s). Identify the related occupational health problem such as cumulative trauma disorder, hand-arm vibration exposure and lower back injury. Where appropriate, rough sketches, photographs, with explanatory detail, and/or reference to video tapes taken are encouraged.

b. A short paragraph describing the corrective action(s) implemented by the employer. The description should include changes made in work station design, tools, material handling equipment, environment, personal protective equipment and employee retraining and job rotation. Where appropriate, provide sketches, photographs, and/or videotape of the work place after the corrective action was taken.

c. A brief summary of significant benefits realized. Examples of such benefits are cost savings, the identification and successful solution to a unique ergonomic hazard, increased awareness of work place safety and health, and injuries prevented or reduced by the recommended abatement methods. An estimate of cost savings should be determined based on reduced workers' compensation costs, medical services, time lost from work, and increased production, if appropriate.

d. The number of employees who may have possibly be benefitted from the abatement method(s).

3. The summary shall not be forwarded to the Deputy Director until the case has been closed.

4. The Deputy Director will review the summaries and make sure that they meet the criteria set out by OSHA before they are transmitted to the OSHA Regional Administrator.

a. If the Deputy Director determines that it meets the criteria set out by OSHA, he or she shall forward it to the OSHA Regional Administrator for it to be considered by OSHA for inclusion in their program.

b. If the Deputy Director determines that it is lacking some of the criteria, he or she will work with the appropriate Chief to gather the information necessary for it to meet the criteria before it is sent to the OSHA Regional Administrator.

5. Recipient of the summaries may use them in any way they choose. They are not copyrighted, and permission is not required to reproduce them. OSHA will be requested, however, to credit the Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Program, Alaska Department of Labor if they choose to disseminate summaries that are prepared by the Alaska program.