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Contact

Aimée O’Grady

AIHA Scientific & Technical Initiatives

(703) 846-0795; aogrady@aiha.org

Melissa Hurley

AIHA Communications

(703) 846-0740; mhurley@aiha.org

AIHA Issues Statement on Occupational Exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation

AIHA supports and encourages continued research, regulatory agency inspection and enforcement, and development of programs and procedures

FAIRFAX, VA (April 5, 2006) — There is still an immense misunderstanding by industrial hygienists and the public regarding the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation. In light of the growing concerns over the health risks of occupational exposure to UV radiation, the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) has issued recommendations for an aggressive prevention and protection policy. AIHA’s Nonionizing Committee created the new position statement.

UV radiation is a form of nonionizing electromagnetic radiation that is divided into three regions based upon biological effects. UV radiation has been associated with human skin cancer and other adverse health effects. UV radiation can cause other harmful health effects from both chronic and acute exposures including erythema, accelerated skin aging, cataracts, retinal burns, photokeratitis, genetic mutation, photosensitivity, and immune suppression.

Many occupations expose workers to excessive amounts of UV radiation from natural sunlight or other manmade sources such as germicidal lamps, welding, and blast furnaces. Occupational exposures to harmful UV radiation can be prevented or minimized through the use of engineering, administrative, and personnel protective equipment controls.

With regards to the increasing number of workers exposed, the levels of exposure, and the subsequent health effects, AIHA encourages industrial hygienists and other occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) specialists to be proactive and assist their institutions and organizations in increasing management, worker, and public awareness, and learning more about UV radiation and effective control techniques regarding occupational exposures.

AIHA’s new position statement on UV radiation is available at www.aiha.org under “Government Affairs.” For more information, please contact Aimée O’Grady at (703) 846-0795 or aogrady@aiha.org.

Founded in 1939, the **American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)** is the premier association of occupational and environmental health and safety professionals. AIHA's 11,800 members play a crucial role on the front line of worker health and safety every day. Members represent a cross-section of industry, private business, labor, government, and academia. For more information, go to www.aiha.org.