

CHG's VPP challenge game boosts safety awareness

Almost 1,100 employee-owners and subcontractors of CH2M HILL Hanford Group are getting together over breakfast to talk about safety. And they have some good news to discuss.

They are the CHG employees and subcontractors who successfully participated in the fiscal year 2001 Voluntary Protection Program challenge, an annual game that increases VPP awareness. The Voluntary Protection Program, initiated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and adopted by the Department of Energy, promotes excellence in occupational safety and health protection.

Each successful participant in the CHG VPP challenge game is invited to one of several catered breakfasts being held over a period of weeks at Building 2704-HV in the 200 Area.

"When one considers that 1,635 people had the opportunity to participate, 1,091 is an impressive number," said CHG President Fran DeLozier. "And the VPP committees and I are pleased that the fiscal year that recently ended was one that had CHG posting some equally impressive safety statistics," she added.

"What is even more impressive is that we improved on safety while accomplishing so much operationally — things like completing the waste treatment plant infrastructure early and under budget, replacing the pump in Tank AW-104, upgrading four waste transfer pits and installing 1,300 feet of double-contained transfer pipe," DeLozier said.



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CH2M HILL Hanford Group employees and subcontractors recently finished a Voluntary Protection Program safety awareness campaign at the end of a fiscal year in which CHG improved on safety while accomplishing several challenging projects. The work included replacing and operating a waste transfer pump in Tank AW-104, one of the most complex and challenging projects in the tank farms during the past 10 years.

Hazardous work

DeLozier said the work of managing, characterizing, stabilizing and retrieving highly radioactive tank waste involves the four most hazardous occupations at Hanford — nuclear chemical operators, pipefitters, radiological control technicians and electricians. "Yet, by working safely and looking out for each other, CHG was able to reduce its recordable injury and illness rate by 20 percent in FY 2001," she said.

DeLozier also reported that CHG reduced its lost and restricted workday case rate from 0.46 to 0.34 and the safety cost index rate by 44 percent, from \$18.88 per 100 hours worked to \$8.45 per 100 hours worked.

Injuries and lost and restricted workdays were not the only CHG safety statistics that improved over the previous year. The number of reportable radiological skin and clothing contaminations dropped by more than 70 percent to only four for the entire 12-month period. "In general, our numbers of reportable and recordable safety incidents are low, but even one incident is one too many," DeLozier said.

DeLozier said while CHG's fiscal year 2001 numbers compare favorably with DOE contractors across the nation, CHG managers and employees are not being complacent, and she expects the numbers to continue to improve. "If you are not continually improving, you're going backward," she said.

All CHG employees are being trained in the Safety Training Observation Program, called STOP, developed by the DuPont Company. This program teaches that all accidents are preventable. It is designed to develop workers' skills to identify safe and unsafe situations and interact with each other about all aspects of safety. ♦