

# Working Statewide

For the **Safety & Health** of CSEA-represented NYS Employees

A Summary Report on the 2003 – 2007 Agreement between New York State and CSEA

## Statewide Committee Cites 2003 – 2007 Accomplishments

### From the Cochairs. . .

We are pleased with the work accomplished by the NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety and Health Committee during the 2003 – 2007 Agreement between New York State and CSEA.

Initially, the agenda established for the committee appeared expansive, detailed, encompassing, and ambitious to the point of almost being intimidating. However, the challenges set forth in the agenda motivated committee members to view their activities in a task-oriented manner. This motivation was skillfully cultivated and facilitated by staff from the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training (Partnership).

It was especially constructive to break down tasks from the agenda by forming six subcommittees. Each subcommittee included representatives from management, CSEA, and the Partnership with specific safety and health interests and expertise. Tasks required precise definition of problems, identification of hazards and contributing causes of harm, and extensive research prior to selecting consultants for a stated program or training need.

Subcommittee members worked respectfully, collaboratively, and enthusiastically. Their cross-agency interaction, networking, and pursuit of common interests resulted in many tangible outcomes that are highlighted in this report.

We look forward to continuing this important work.

Respectfully,



Chuck Vejvoda  
NYS Cochair

Janet Foley  
CSEA Cochair



### NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety and Health Committee members

**Top row** (l. to r.): Deb Downey, Chuck Parmentier, Chuck Vejvoda (NYS Cochair), Walter Greenberg, Frank Cosentino, Karen Maikels, Jim McHugh, Janet Foley (CSEA Cochair), Geraldine Smith, Andy Barna, Nick Schkrioba, Monique St. Hilaire, Bob Kennedy, Brian Gibney, Charles Hatch. **Bottom row:** Mark Stipano, Paul Blujus, Debye Lurie, Matt Kozak, missing: Valerie Ayers and Bob Bailey.

The New York State (NYS) and Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) Statewide Safety and Health Committee is a labor-management committee that originated from the negotiations that led to the 1979 – 1982 collective bargaining agreement.

In the 2003 – 2007 negotiations, the CSEA Article 15 proposals lent themselves to the concept of agenda items for the committee. As a result, a side letter was signed with CSEA establishing the agenda.

The ambitious agenda transformed the committee's orientation from one that viewed its activities as a continuation of negotiations to one that was almost exclusively task oriented. It was clear that this effort was just the beginning for the challenges ahead.

Subcommittees were formed with representatives from management, CSEA staff, and Partnership staff, all working toward the goal of completing tasks assigned from the agenda.

The subcommittees are:

- Elements of a Safety and Health Program
- Ergonomics
- Imminent Danger
- Pressure Vessel Safety
- Workplace Environment
- Workplace Security

All members of the subcommittees were considered to be equal participants and contributors. They often remarked that their efforts were proactive, non-partisan, and focused on solutions.

This report features a briefing about each subcommittee's activities, results, and recommendations for the future.

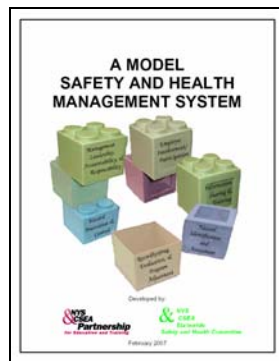
# Subcommittee Activities

## Elements of a Safety and Health Program Subcommittee



(l. to r.): Brian Gibney, Chuck Vejvoda, Mark Stackrow, Andy Barna, Jim McHugh, missing: Bob Kennedy and Valerie Ayers.

In an effort to address the question, "What comprises a safety and health program?", the subcommittee completed the research and development of such a model. A model safety and health program has been drafted based on six "elements." The goal was to produce a model that is adaptable, comprehensive, straightforward, sustainable, and understandable. The model is based, in part, on OSHA's Proposed Safety and Health Program Rule 29 CFR 1900.1. Agency level training programs have been developed on the adoption, administration, and sustainment of this model.



*"Both cochairs made it very plain right from the beginning that this was going to be a task-oriented committee and they never wavered from that. The end results are the final products of all of the subcommittees. This is how all labor-management committees should operate."*

Jim McHugh – CSEA-DOT, Elements Subcommittee

## Pressure Vessel Safety Subcommittee

The Pressure Vessel Safety Subcommittee addressed concerns about workplace injuries throughout the state caused by boiler/steam pressure vessel heating systems. The subcommittee is identifying and developing course content for a training program on potential dangers and precautions related to these systems.

*"The level of participation in our open forum style meetings allowed us to agree on a training outline rather quickly. If the training is implemented, SUNY boiler plant & HVAC workers would be armed with the knowledge they need to do their jobs safely."*

Marty Curtis – Binghamton University, Boiler Steam Pressure Work Group

## Imminent Danger Subcommittee

Members of this subcommittee agree the best way to communicate information about imminent dangers to employees in the workplace is through a training program. The subcommittee is developing a training program on identifying types of dangers, concerns, and potential solutions.

*"There have been several recommendations put forward to address the need to improve the ability to recognize imminent danger situations. We continue to strive to build a recognition system that will address the myriad of hazards faced by a diversity of titles in a universe of situations."*

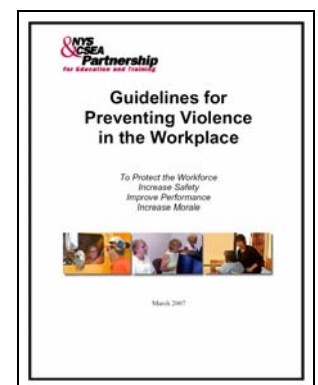
Chuck Vejvoda – GOER Imminent Danger Subcommittee

## Workplace Security Subcommittee



(l. to r.): Nick Schkrioba, Debye Lurie, Karen Maikels, Deb Downey, Mark Stackrow, Monique St. Hilaire, Matt Kozak, Chuck Parmentier.

The Workplace Security Subcommittee drafted a resource to assist agency planners and union leadership in complying with the NYS Public Employee Safety and Security Act. Subcommittee members prepared *Guidelines for Preventing Violence in the Workplace* that is a resource for selecting appropriate control methods to mitigate risk factors.



*"It's refreshing to work with such devoted individuals who have no agenda but to help others."*

Karen Maikels – OASAS-CSEA, Workplace Security Subcommittee

## Ergonomics Subcommittee

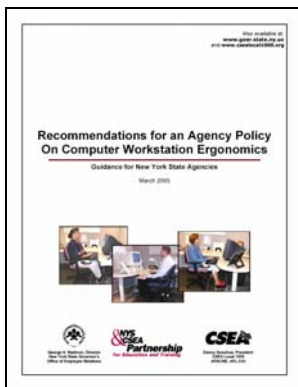
The work of this subcommittee covers several projects involving ergonomics – the science of designing the job to fit the worker, rather than physically forcing the worker's body to fit the job.



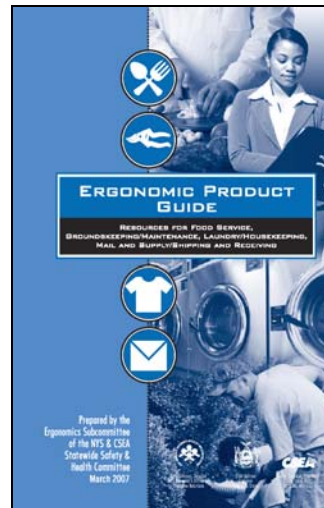
(l. to r.): Paul Blujus, Linda Torino, Jeremiah Coleman, Janet Foley, Bob Bailey, Walter Greenberg.

Projects include:

- **Zero Lift Program at NYS Veterans' Home at Batavia** – A Partnership grant was awarded to the Veterans' Home to finalize, implement, and document a "Zero Lift" Safe Patient Handling Program. The program can serve as a model for other health care facilities.
- **New Construction in Health Care Facilities** – The subcommittee prepared a scope of services document to assist agencies undergoing new construction of health care facilities with the design of ergonomic work environments.
- **Safe Patient Handling and Movement Conference** – Labor and management representatives participated in this conference to learn about the latest ergonomic research and developments.



- **Recommendations for an Agency Policy on Computer Workstation Ergonomics** – The subcommittee distributed a notebook and compact disk to managers and CSEA leaders throughout New York State on how to address safety and health issues related to using computers and Video Display Terminals.



- **Ergonomic Product Guide** – The subcommittee developed an educational resource for non-direct care workers on ergonomic risk factors and how to address them. Sample product descriptions and guidelines for product purchasing focus on ergonomic aids, products, and tools in the areas of Food Service Groundskeeping/

Maintenance, Laundry/Housekeeping, Mail and Supply/Shipping, and Receiving.

*"In more than 30 years of labor relations experience in New York State, my affiliation with this Safety and Health Committee has been one of the most meaningful and productive experiences in my career. It represents a shining example of what can be accomplished through labor-management cooperation."*

Walter Greenberg, OCFS, Ergonomics Subcommittee

## Workplace Environment Subcommittee



(l. to r.): Charles Hatch, Frank Cosentino, Stephanie Rockmacher, Mark Stipano, Geraldine Smith.

The members of this subcommittee are charged with addressing issues related to working conditions in extreme temperatures and indoor air quality. Projects include development of the following informational resources:

- **Safety & Health Guidelines for Indoor Office, Industrial, and Extreme Temperature Working Conditions** and **Pocket Guide for Frontline Workers** – Informational resources for supervisors about dangers and solutions for working in extreme temperature environments.

(Workplace Environment Subcommittee continued on next page)

(Workplace Environment Subcommittee continued)

- **Indoor Air Quality Guidelines** – Fact sheets and other resource information on contaminants, remodeling, ventilation systems, and diagnostic tools.

*“Our subcommittee’s approach has been to enrich worker knowledge about a quality work environment and create a network of resources to last a lifetime.”*

Frank Cosentino – Liquor Authority-CSEA,  
Workplace Environment Subcommittee

*“CSEA and agency management now have a comprehensive roadmap to guide us in the development of a more systematic, preventive approach to managing and improving occupational safety and health, one that treats worker safety as a precondition, not just a priority among others.”*

Guy Dugas – CSEA Contract Administrator,  
NYS & CSEA Partnership Board of Directors

*“Our predecessors recognized early on that a forum was needed to address issues in a timely and thorough manner outside of the contract negotiations process. We can say with confidence that the NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety and Health Committee has met their expectations during the 2003 – 2007 contract.”*

Mike McDonald – New York State Governor’s Office  
of Employee Relations, NYS & CSEA Partnership  
Board of Directors

*“The Partnership is proud to work with the NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety & Health Committee on these significant projects. The results achieved during the 2003 – 2007 contract period are extraordinary and serve as an example of what can be achieved when labor and management collaborate. We look forward to continuing this important work in the next contract term.”*

Ira Baumgarten and Deb Berg – Co-Directors  
NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training



## Recommendations for Future Activities:

- Obtain more involvement from employees.
- Improve information resources on workers' injury experiences in different titles and agencies. Examples: OPRHP park employees, DOT roadside construction employees, OGS heavy equipment operators, DEC employees handling wild animals.
- Gain commitment from higher-level managers on safety and health issues.
- Improve communication with agencies and employees.
- Address the lack of safety and health consultants to assist with issues unique to public sector work.
- Improve marketing of accomplishments and services to identified stakeholders.
- Reduce workers' compensation claims, associated costs, and worksite interruptions.
- Acquire occupational injury and illness data from the Accident Reporting System in order to determine the effectiveness of overall risk reduction efforts.
- Increase the number of CSEA members on the NYS & CSEA Statewide Safety and Health Committee.
- Obtain access to workers with specialized job tasks that pose unique workplace hazards.
- Acquire workers' compensation injury and illness data with cost analysis to provide a clearer focus and a method to evaluate programs.
- Augment safety and health training capacity in state agencies via train-the-trainer programs.
- Promote the *Elements of a Safety and Health Program Model* at all levels of State government.
- Conduct site visits to gain first-hand experience about worksite environments.
- Establish more labor-management safety and health committees at agencies and facilities.
- Invite experts from other states to help with unique issues.
- Use the NYS & CSEA Partnership, CSEA, and GOER web sites to educate and communicate with agencies and workers.
- Look at big issues that cross many agencies.
- Address issues such as stress, working alone, assaults, impact of overtime on injury rates, disaster preparedness, fall protection, and electrical hazards.