

# Government Has The Obligation To Set Occupational Standards

- >> The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHAct) specifies that OSHA shall work to develop and promulgate occupational safety and health standards that assure the greatest protection of the safety and/or health of workers. To date, OSHA has adopted and promulgated hundreds of mandatory safety and health standards. However, most of these safety and health standards were adopted from existing consensus standards that preceded the establishment of OSHA.

**During the Bush Administration,** OSHA has withdrawn 23 OSHA standards scheduled for action on the federal regulatory agenda. In addition, the Bush Administration led the successful efforts revoking the comprehensive Ergonomics Standard promulgated during the final months of the Clinton Administration. Other standards such as Payment for Personal Protective Equipment have been relegated to long-term action. Rather than act to provide adequate workplace protections, the Bush Administration has worked to create voluntary partnerships as well as develop and implement voluntary, and, thus, non-mandatory safety and health guidelines preferred by its corporate allies.

- >> The OSHAct established OSHA's oversight and enforcement authority to ensure that employers are providing safe and healthful workplaces or, in the case of identified workplace hazards and related worker injuries and illnesses, to ensure that employers are providing correction or abatement of the hazards as well as dedicating adequate resources to accomplish these activities.

**During the Bush Administration,** through the development and implementation of employer-friendly voluntary safety and health guidelines, OSHA has seemingly abdicated its responsibility to protect workers from exposure to occupational safety and health hazards.

- >> The OSHAct specifies that the agency will dedicate adequate resources to the development and promulgation of workplace safety and health standards, as well as enforcement activities. However, during the Bush Administration, OSHA has not fulfilled this mandate. Rather, OSHA has initiated an employer-friendly, voluntary standards approach that favors employer concerns over the provision of adequate employee workplace safety and health protections.

**Contact the CWA Occupational Safety and Health  
Department at [www.cwasafetyandhealth.org](http://www.cwasafetyandhealth.org).**

