

# OSHA's World Trade Center Response

## Partnering for Safety

OSHA has entered into two new partnerships to protect the safety and health of thousands of workers at the World Trade Center disaster site and Staten Island recovery operation.

The WTC Emergency Project Partnership Agreement formalizes a commitment to safety and health among contractors, employees, employee representatives, and governmental agencies participating in the emergency response efforts in lower Manhattan. In addition to OSHA, participants include the New York City Department of Design and Construction and the Fire Department of New York (Co-Incident Commanders); Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York; Building Trades Employers' Association; Contractors Association of Greater New York; General Contractors Association; and the four prime contractors at the WTC site: AMEC Construction Management, Inc.; Bovis Lend Lease LMB, Inc.; Tully Construction Co., Inc.; and Turner/Plaza Construction Joint Venture.

The partnership agreement outlines a cooperative effort to ensure a safe work environment. New safety and health initiatives



*A new partnership is helping protect workers at the World Trade Center site.  
Photo by Shawn Moore*



Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, center, joins Edward J. Malloy, left, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York; and Louis J. Coletti, chairman and chief operating officer of the Building Trades Employers Association, in signing the World Trade Center partnership agreement. Photo by Shawn Moore

include a site-orientation training program and establishment of a safety committee of representatives from labor and management organizations as well as OSHA and other participating agencies. The orientation program familiarizes workers with potential hazards and personal protective equipment requirements.

“This is a remarkable partnership to ensure the safety of these heroes as much as possible,” says Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, “because we can’t let the terrorists claim another American life.”

In a related effort, OSHA launched a new partnership to protect workers involved in the World Trade Center Staten Island recovery operation. Joining OSHA in the partnership are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Environmental Protection Agency; New York Police Department; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; New York City Department of Health;

New York City Department of Sanitation; Hugo Neu Schnitzer East; Phillips and Jordan; Evans Environmental and Geosciences; Yanuzzi and Sons, Inc.; Mazzochi

Wrecking; Taylor Recycling Facility LLC; International Union of Operating Engineers, Locals 14-14B and 15; and Garner Environmental Services, Inc.

The Staten Island partnership calls on participants to work together in their respective roles to create the highest level of worker safety and health in extremely difficult work environments. The agreement provides for safety meetings, joint safety monitoring tours, respirator fit testing, air sampling, and employee training.

John Henshaw, OSHA Administrator, praised the two partnerships for their commitment to worker safety and health. “Our challenge is to ensure the September 11 tragedy claims no more victims in terms of fatalities or serious injuries or illnesses,” he says. “That challenge demands a cooperative, highly coordinated effort. These partnerships provide the framework for that effort. JSHQ



Twisted steel and other debris at the site posed many potential safety hazards.

Photo by Shawn Moore

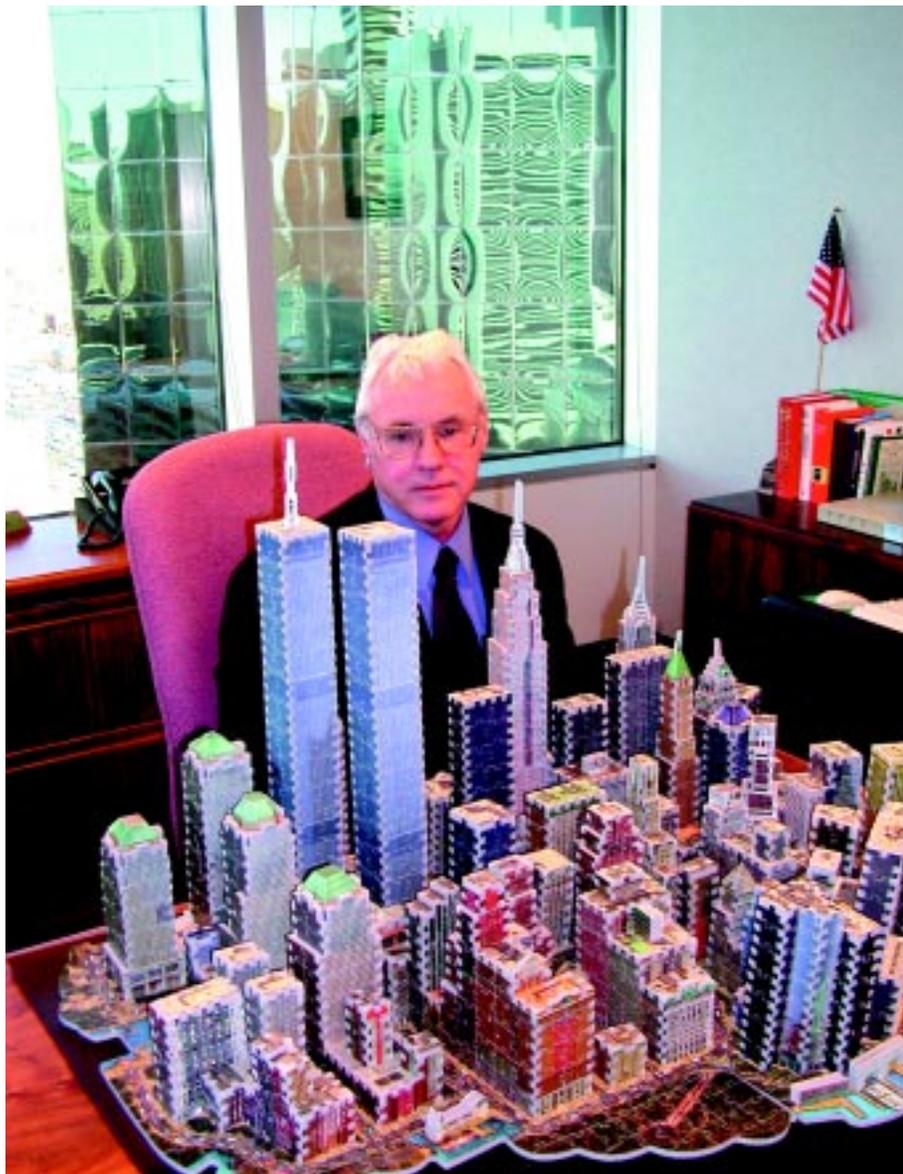
# OSHA Workers Pitch In

*OSHA employees are giving their all to protect workers at the World Trade Center site—and getting much in return.*

*by Donna Miles*

They came from near and far. More than 800 safety and health professionals from federal and state OSHA offices throughout the United States heeded the call to take part in OSHA's World Trade Center response. Joining them were about 12 Voluntary Protection Programs' special government employees.

Working side by side with their colleagues from OSHA's New York region, they faced a massive challenge: to provide 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week support at the World Trade Center site to help



*Greg Baxter, OSHA Deputy Regional Administration in Denver, with his puzzle of the New York skyline, left, and at work on Tower 2 almost 30 years ago. Left photo by Richard Kulczewski*





*Deborah Gabry from OSHA's Technical Support Directorate distributed respirators and performed fit tests for workers at the site.*

protect the thousands of rescue and recovery workers involved in recovery, demolition, and site-clearing operations. Their main focus was on providing site safety and health support by performing risk assessment, monitoring air and physical agents, and distributing and fit-checking respirators.

For Greg Baxter, OSHA's Deputy Regional Administrator in Denver, returning to his native New York City to help had special significance. Baxter's father retired from the New York Police Department and his late father-in-law served 31 years with the Fire Department of New York. Baxter has personal ties to the World Trade Center as well. At age 22, he spent several months working as an ornamental ironworker on Tower 2, bolting on the curtain wall 104 stories above ground. There, working on a jury-rigged scaffold high above the city, Baxter's encounter with a site safety inspector led to his lifetime interest in occupational safety and health. Three years later, Baxter and his wife worked in the Trade

Center as employees of the New York State Department of Labor's Construction Division.

Today in Baxter's Denver office, a huge, three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle of the Manhattan skyline, painstakingly assembled from 3,100 pieces, stands as a testament to his New York roots. Someone

suggested after the September 11 terrorist attacks that he remove the cardboard twin towers of the World Trade Center, but he says, "I don't have the heart to take them down."

After September 11, Baxter says he "felt compelled to do something, to somehow be a part of this tragedy," because, to him, "staying 1,900 miles away from New York was just not an option." He spent 5 weeks at the site, working weekdays at the command center, where he helped secure equipment and resources for the OSHA response team and served as OSHA's liaison with other government agencies involved in the effort. During the weekends, Baxter served on OSHA's safety monitoring teams. He walked the disaster site, observed the work under way, identified hazards, and persuaded workers to take necessary precautions.

Although few OSHA workers had ties to the World Trade Center that ran as deeply as Baxter's, many shared his sense of loss. Anthony Lemire, Assistant Area Director for



*Bob Garvey, Risk Assessment Coordinator, center, discusses air sampling procedures at the site with an OSHA team of staffers from throughout the United States. Photo by Shawn Moore*



*Keith Tsubata from Hawaii's Division of Occupational Safety and Health says he found gratification in knowing he was helping prevent more tragedies at the site.*

the Bangor, Maine, Area Office, felt so “devastated and angered” over the destruction that he says “I felt I owed it to the agency and to myself to help in whatever way necessary.” Lemire spent a week in late October and early November working the 11 p.m.-to-7 a.m. shift as a safety monitor for the tower area. Walking alongside the mountains of twisted metal and debris, he warned the hundreds of workers at the site about hazards ranging from respiratory concerns to fall protection to the dangers of the constant flow of dump trucks, all-terrain vehicles, and emergency vehicles at the site.

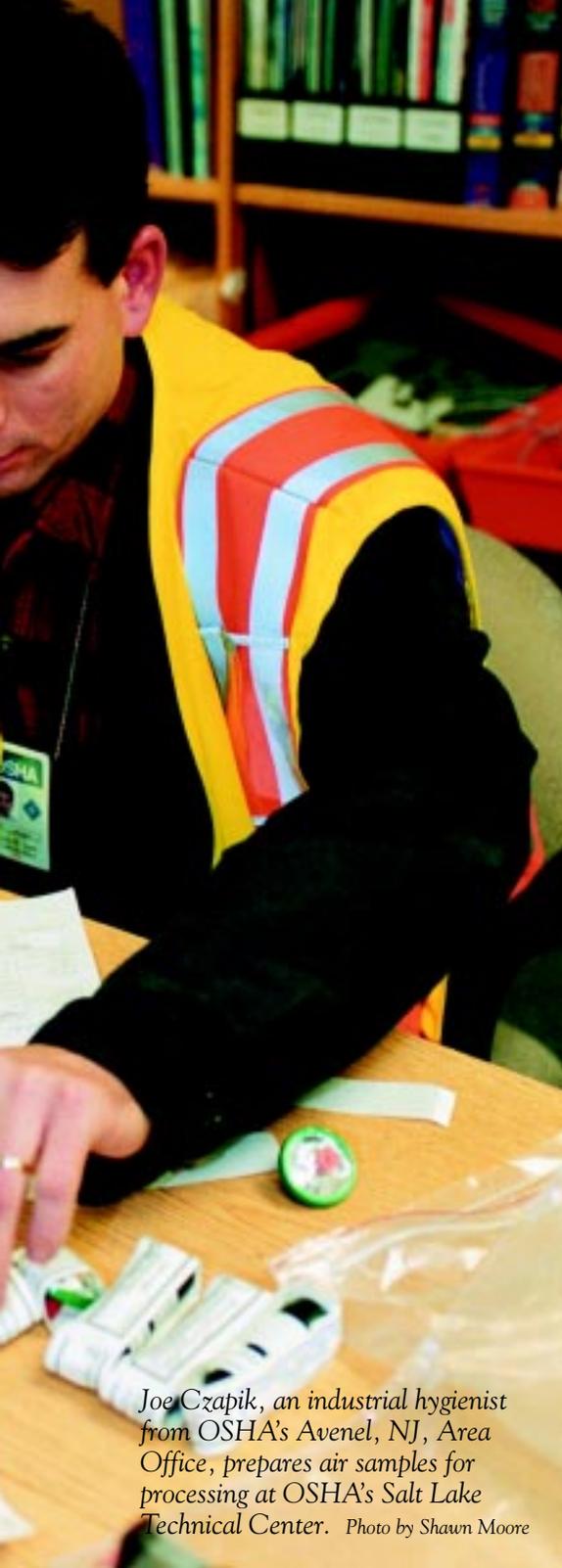
David Doucet, Assistant Area Director in the Baton Rouge, LA, Area Office, also worked as a safety monitor at the site. He says he offered to work at the World Trade Center “plain and simple, for the preservation of human life.” He says, “I figured the workers at the World Trade Center had enough things on their mind from the

tragic event that their personal safety might be overlooked, and I could be the one to help them realize that they, too, have a family waiting for them at home.”

Mark Behrens, a safety consultant for Hawaii's Division of Occupational Safety and Health, saw OSHA's request for workers as a welcomed opportunity. “The whole country was wondering what they could do to help, and here this invitation to help was dropped in my lap one morning when I came to work,” he says. Working at the site for a week in early November, he distributed respirators and provided training and fit-checks to workers involved in the recovery operation. While helping to protect them from hazards at the site, Behrens says “I tried my best to provide encouragement and to spread ‘aloha’ to workers at the site. I dealt with 100 different people on a typical day and did a lot more listening than talking.”



Patricia Gaydos, the state plan monitor for OSHA's Denver Regional Office, agrees that working at Ground Zero gave her an unexpected opportunity to help. “I never dreamed, as I watched the towers go down from my hotel room [TV] in Montana, that I would have



Joe Czabik, an industrial hygienist from OSHA's Avenel, NJ, Area Office, prepares air samples for processing at OSHA's Salt Lake Technical Center. Photo by Shawn Moore

the opportunity to do something," she says. "But that opportunity came and I couldn't refuse." She spent a week at the disaster site sampling air for asbestos, silica, lead and other heavy metals, carbon monoxide, and organic and inorganic compounds.



Nancy Diaz from OSHA's Hasbrouck Heights, NJ, Area Office instructs a New York City police officer in the use of respiratory protection at the site. Photo by Donna Miles

Peggy Peterson, a senior industrial hygienist for the Iowa Division of Labor, was among representatives of 22 OSHA-approved state plan states and OSHA onsite consultation programs who pitched in to support the effort. Working at the site from late November to early December, she taught workers and rescue personnel how to wear their respiratory protection properly and warned them about the dangers of elements such as silica and lead that they could be exposed to if they didn't.

Deborah Gabry, a health scientist in the OSHA National Office's Technical Support Directorate in Washington, DC, spent a week at the site in late December distributing and fit-testing respirators and doing her best to educate workers about the importance of wearing them consistently. A native New Yorker, Gabry says she "wanted to make a difference" to help workers at the site and to "give back to the New

York community that has given so much to me."

Working at the site, the workers agree, was difficult and painful—but rewarding. Peterson recalls sights and sounds she will never forget: "heavy metal steel scraping and being pulled in directions against the natural movement, an I-beam being removed from the pile, still on fire, the size of the rubble pile shrinking by the hour, the movement of vehicles." Of her experience, she says, "I've seen the destruction. I heard the sounds of the recovery. I watched the bodies solemnly taken from the pile. I smelled the ash, dust, and smoke. I was there. I feel that I was able, in a very small way, to help the people of New York and the rescue workers."

Keith Tsubata, an occupational safety and health advisor for Hawaii's Division of Occupational Safety and Health, says that as he worked the 11 p.m.-to-7 a.m. shift distributing personal protective equipment at the site, "I stood and

stared at the site every night and shook my head in disbelief.” The gratification, he says, was knowing that he was doing his part to help prevent additional tragedies at the site. “I felt like I made a difference,” he says.

Doucet, too, says he felt he played a tangible role in protecting the recovery workers. Recognizing that a cleanup crew was throwing debris out of a building heavily damaged during the twin towers’ collapse, he helped get the street below barricaded to prevent recovery workers there from getting struck. He says he got special pleasure in “selling safety” to employers and employees at the site. “It’s my job, it’s what I love, and it’s what I get paid to do,” he says.

Gabry says she gained “a tremendous appreciation for the workers and what they’re doing at the site,” and felt that the workers, in turn, “were genuinely appreciative that someone was taking the time to look out for their safety and well-being.” She left New York feeling that “I really made a difference” and that because of her efforts, workers who might otherwise not have worn their respirators now do. “It’s such a good feeling to make a positive impact on somebody,” she says. “After my experience in New York, I don’t feel like I’ll ever be the same.”

Behrens says his World Trade Center experience gave him a deep appreciation of the workers at the site. “The World Trade Center exemplifies teamwork,” he says. “What struck me the most and what still inspires me to this day is the amazing attitude of all the people I met and was fortunate enough to work with at Ground Zero. I’ve often heard that ‘attitude

is everything,’ and the workers at Ground Zero are a living testament.”

Like his OSHA colleagues, Baxter says he was startled when he first saw the enormity of the 16-acre disaster site and the of the damage. “The sights, sounds, and smell of the site will forever be etched on my mind,” he says. “I thought of Dante’s Inferno because all I could see was this massive, cube-like block of debris, lit up by ‘stadium’ lights, grapplers reaching into the debris like dinosaurs, and a constant plume of smoke. It was almost impossible to comprehend.”

Standing at Ground Zero looking at the twisted steel that had collapsed from above, he says he couldn’t help but wonder if he was looking at the same columns that he had seen while working on Tower 2 almost 30 years ago. He

admits that he returned to his Denver office in late October with mixed feelings. “I left with sadness that I was abandoning the job, that there was more to be done, that maybe I should still be there,” he says.” Being a part of the OSHA World Trade Center effort will, I am sure, be a highlight of my career. It will be a story I’ll be telling my grandchildren and anyone else willing to listen.”

Pat Clark, OSHA’s Regional Administrator in New York, expressed “respect and gratitude” for members of the “OSHA ‘family’ outside Region II who immediately stepped up to the plate to help us during this remarkable time.” She says that at some times, “We had more volunteers than slots—a testament to the dedication of OSHA employees, both federal and state, to do their jobs.” JSHQ

## OSHA Facts

Federal and state OSHA personnel involved in the emergency project... More than 800

OSHA-approved state plans and OSHA onsite consultation programs providing volunteers...22

OSHA personnel currently working at the site every day...60

OSHA 8-hour shifts worked at the site...About 6,000

Air and bulk samples taken by OSHA at the site...3,600 (includes metals, asbestos, silica, and other volatile organic compounds)

Respirators issued by OSHA since September 13...More than 113,500

Respirators issued per day by OSHA during first weeks after the attack...4,000

Quantitative fit tests performed by OSHA since December 1...More than 2,000 (Includes 1,200 Fire Department of New York personnel)

Hardhats distributed by OSHA since September 13...More than 11,200

Safety glasses and goggles distributed by OSHA since September 13...More than 11,500

Protective gloves distributed by OSHA since September 11...More than 21,000