

**Northeast Illinois Residential Construction Partnership
Residential Construction Employers Council
and the
Chicago & Northeast Illinois District
Council of Carpenters Apprentice & Training Program
and the
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
and the
State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program**

I. BACKGROUND

The Residential Construction Employers Council (RCEC), the Chicago & Northeast Illinois District Council of Carpenters Apprentice & Training Program (Carpenters), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program (DCCA) recognize that construction workers are exposed to significant hazards.

Residential Construction Employers Council members employ special trade contractors, especially carpenters, to build homes. The latest Bureau of Labor Statistic's (BLS) data for Illinois (1999) indicates that the injury and illness rate for special trade contractors, which includes carpenters, is 11.0. This is 83% above the average injury and illness rate for all industries in Illinois. BLS data further shows there were more than 17,000 occupational injury cases to specialty trade workers.

There are numerous health and safety issues associated with construction. They include but are not limited to: fall hazards, ergonomic hazards from lifting and repetitive tasks, electrical hazards from live equipment or ungrounded parts of equipment, and exposure to chemical hazards, such as silica, among others.

Based on experience, OSHA recognizes that outreach activities and cooperative initiatives can have a significant impact on worker safety and health. These tools provide opportunities for employers and employees to voluntarily improve their safety and health management systems and be recognized for outstanding performance.

The Residential Construction Employers Council located in Oak Brook, covers several counties in Northern Illinois. The RCEC represents more than 200 contractors involved in home building, remodeling, design, housing finance, building product manufacturing and other segments of residential construction, employing more than 9000 tradesmen and 4000 onsite supervisory and office personnel. Working together, the RCEC, Carpenters, OSHA and DCCA can expand the information, assistance and training available to contractors on safety and health in the workplace. In addition, employers can be recognized for their commitment to worker safety and health through

OSHA's Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) or Consultation's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).

II. PARTNERSHIP GOALS

The RCEC, Carpenters, OSHA and DCCA will work in partnership to accomplish the following partnership goals:

- Enhance outreach activities and training programs to improve contractor awareness of OSHA's regulations, safety and health management systems, and cooperative programs.
- Increase the use of OSHA technical and training assistance, and participation in cooperative programs by contractors.
- Improve the safety and health performance of contractors that receive outreach, training, and other assistance service (i.e. mentoring, onsite consultation, hazard identification).

III. OBJECTIVES

The RCEC, Carpenters, OSHA, and DCCA will work in partnership to accomplish the following objectives in support of the partnership goals:

Awareness: Develop an efficient and effective avenue for communicating occupational safety and health information and resource options to contractors to:

- Increase the knowledge of OSHA's regulatory requirements through publications geared toward residential contractors.
- Highlight the benefits of having a comprehensive safety and health management system.
- Increase use by residential contractors of RCEC, Carpenters, OSHA and DCCA resources.

Referrals & Assistance: Facilitate the use of and participation in OSHA's cooperative programs to:

- Identify residential contractors who wish to improve their safety and health performance and promote the use of Consultation services and training.
- Expedite referrals to the appropriate Consultation project to request assistance.
- Identify residential contractors who wish to gain recognition through the VPP and SHARP.

Training: Identify and target interested residential contractors for safety and health training on OSHA requirements in addition to the elements and benefits of effective safety and health management systems. Specifically:

- Identify residential contractor needs for specific safety and health training and develop and deliver courses as appropriate.

Improved Performance: Demonstrate a positive impact on worker safety and health for businesses participating in activities provided through the partnership to:

- Reduce the number of accidents, injuries and associated costs in participating residential contractors; track and analyze results.
- Improve the accuracy of recordkeeping to capture the “true picture” of illnesses and injuries.
- Increase the number of residential contractors with written, comprehensive safety and health management systems.

IV. PARTNER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RCEC, Carpenters, OSHA, and DCCA agree to work in partnership to improve safety and health performance of residential contractors.

The Residential Construction Employers Council agrees to work with clients to:

- Identify issues on which OSHA should focus in order to meet client needs.
- Distribute safety and health information to their clients.
- Provide locations and outreach assistance for training on OSHA requirements and effective safety and health management systems.
- Promote OSHA’s cooperative programs among their clients, and provide referrals to OSHA (e.g., Consultation and mentoring requests) when authorized to do so by individual residential contractors.
- Support this partnership through cooperative relations with all parties involved.
- Track activities.

The Chicago & Northeast Illinois District Council of Carpenters Apprentice & Training Program agrees to:

- Support this partnership through cooperative relations with all parties involved.
- Assist in the overall training requirements as outlined in this agreement.
- Work with the contractors and RCEC to fulfill the training requirements.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration agrees to:

- Work cooperatively with the RCEC and/or its clients to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at residential contractors.
- Provide training and training materials, through the RCEC, to help employers understand and comply with OSHA regulations and to implement effective safety and health management systems.
- Respond to referrals from the RCEC and/or its clients, on VPP participation.
- Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

The State of Illinois On-Site Consultation Program agrees to:

- Work cooperatively with the RCEC and/or its clients to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at residential contractors.
- Respond to referrals from the RCEC and/or its clients, providing OSHA services to residential contractors (e.g. Consultation).
- Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

V. PARTNERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

Steering Committee: A Steering Committee will be formed to manage the partnership. Representatives from each of the following will chair the Committee: The Residential Construction Employers Council (2), Carpenters (2), OSHA (2), and the State of Illinois Consultation Program (1).

The committee will determine partnership procedures, hold quarterly meetings, track, analyze and share information on partnership activities and results, and meet at least annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement. When possible, meetings will take place at the RCEC offices.

VI. PARTNERSHIP MEASURES

The Partnership Steering Committee (See Section V) will identify appropriate performance measures for the partnership. These measures will focus on the impact of outreach, training, assistance, and reductions in illness and injury experience.

VII. OSHA INSPECTIONS

All RCEC clients will remain subject to OSHA inspections and investigations in accordance with agency procedures. Participation in the partnership will not be used as a method to target residential contractors for inspections.

VIII. EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

The provisions of this agreement identified herein, shall not modify any legal or contractual rights and remedies.

IX. TERMS OF AGREEMENT

This agreement will begin 30 days from date of signing and run for three (3) years. The agreement will be reviewed annually in writing and at the end of the three (3) year term by the Steering Committee. The agreement may be modified at any time with the agreement of all signatory partners. The agreement may be renewed at the end of three years, also with agreement from all parties.

X. FUNDS

It is not anticipated that any funding will be transferred between OSHA and the RCEC. However, OSHA will endeavor to provide the necessary training and promotional materials, subject to the availability of appropriations.

XI. TERMINATION

The partnership may be terminated for any reason 30 days following the receipt of a signed, written letter from any signatory partner.

Signature Page

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2002.

Charlie Shields
Area Director, Aurora

Diane Turek
Area Director, Chicago North

Gary Anderson
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