

## **“Has the US issued any guidance on how to safely use nanomaterials?”**

On 4 April 2016, the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) published a safety program guide for small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which is aimed to help SMEs design successful nanotechnology workforce safety programs, and outlines the steps necessary for an effective risk management plan that incorporates the following hierarchy of controls: elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment.

NIOSH's new safety program guide for SMEs is entitled "Building a Safety Program to Protect the Nanotechnology Workforce: A Guide for Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises." The guide states that employees in the nanotechnology workforce may be at risk of exposure to harmful chemicals by inhalation, skin absorption, or ingestion because nanomaterials can be easily dispersed.

The guide is intended to help SMEs design successful nanotechnology workforce safety programs, and outlines the steps necessary for an effective risk management plan that incorporates hierarchy of the following controls: elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment. The guide lists leadership by top management, inclusion of employees, a Safety Committee, written risk management plan and evaluation of that plan as key elements for a successful health and safety program.

Small and medium sized businesses that produce or handle nanomaterials should take note of the new guide and evaluate their current safety processes. Although advisory, the guide is useful in determining sufficiency and compliance of current safety procedures and systems.

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