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## **US Department of Labor's OSHA establishes alliance with Polish American Contractors Builders Association to protect workers**

**CHICAGO** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has entered into an alliance with the Polish American Contractors Builders Association to provide information, guidance and training resources to protect the health and safety of construction workers in and around Chicago. All three of OSHA's Chicago area offices – in Des Plaines, Calumet City and North Aurora – are participating in the alliance.

“This alliance reflects recognition of the importance of keeping construction workers safe and healthy,” said Diane Turek, area director for OSHA's Chicago North office in Des Plaines. “We want to ensure that all workers understand the hazards involved in construction and how best to protect themselves. Alliances such as this one help to develop effective safety and health programs, while also opening the lines of communication among OSHA, employers and workers.”

Through this voluntary alliance, OSHA and the association will work together to address the occupational topics at the core of OSHA's national, regional and local emphasis programs, as well as the rights of workers and the responsibilities of employers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. OSHA staff also will speak at events sponsored by the association to provide information to workers. Communications will be in Polish and English.

Additionally, the alliance will emphasize fall protection, as falls are a leading cause of death and injury to workers in the construction industry. In April, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis announced a campaign to provide employers and workers with lifesaving information and educational materials about working safely from ladders, scaffolds and roofs in an effort to prevent deadly falls in the construction industry. In 2010, more than 10,000 construction workers were injured as a result of falling while working from heights, and more than 250 workers were killed. OSHA's fall prevention campaign was developed in partnership with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and NIOSH's National Occupational Research Agenda program. More detailed information on fall protection standards is available at <http://www.osha.gov/stopfalls>.

Through its Alliance Program, OSHA works with unions, consulates, trade and professional organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, businesses and educational institutions to prevent workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses. The purpose of each alliance is to develop compliance assistance tools and resources, and educate workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities. Alliance Program participants do not receive exemptions from OSHA programmed inspections. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/alliances/index.html>.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

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