

June 2002

## **NIOSH Withdraws Biosolids Safety Alert, Publishes New Guidance for Class B Biosolids Worker Safety**

*From WEF* - The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Hazard ID #10: **Workers Exposed To Class B Biosolids During And After Field Application** has been recently superseded by **"Guidance For Controlling Potential Risks To Workers Exposed to Class B Biosolids."**

When released in 2000, the HID #10 was criticized by WEF and other biosolids experts as alarmist and poorly researched. WEF provided considerable input and comment in the review of the new Guidance to ensure that more accurate scientific information was presented. The new NIOSH Guidance is a refined and more accurate and useful document for those who work closely with Class B biosolids.

As in the HID #10, the new guidance focuses on potential risks from close occupational exposure to Class B biosolids. The new Guidance stresses that those working with Class B biosolids should avoid eating, drinking, smoking, and chewing gum on the job and should wash hands thoroughly upon leaving the work site and remove clothing and footwear that could transport Class B biosolids off-site. The goal is to avoid possible ingestion or exposure through cuts, scratches, eyes, etc. to possible Class B biosolids pathogens. These are common sense safety practices employed at wastewater treatment facilities.

The new Guidance also corrects or leaves out some of the misinformation that had appeared in the HID #10, including assumptions made from one NIOSH investigation at a land application site in Ohio (Further analysis at that site, conducted after the HID #10 was released, showed that the biosolids investigated had excessively high pathogen levels and were not even Class B). The new Guidance incorporates far more of the known science and includes a more thorough list of references. The new NIOSH Guidance should be helpful to wastewater facility staff, Class B biosolids land application workers, and farmers who work with Class B biosolids. It presents the full range of worker protection options, including the most conservative measures that might be considered. It encourages biosolids workers and managers to assess their particular Class B biosolids management environments and select those protective measures that are appropriate for the particular level of potential worker exposure.

A copy of the new Guidance is attached for your convenience.

*For More Information on This and Other Loss Prevention Issues, Please Contact  
David Patzer, CSRMA Risk Control Advisor at 415.371.5430 or at [dpatzer@driveralliant.com](mailto:dpatzer@driveralliant.com)*