



National Aeronautics and
Space Administration



SA-03-98

Langley Research Center Safety Alert

Date: July 30, 1998

TO: Distribution

FROM: Head, Office of Safety and Facility Assurance, OSEMA

SUBJECT: Langley Research Center Pursuing Certification in OSHA's
Premier Recognition Program

At the end of July 1998, Langley launched an effort to achieve certification under the Departments of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).

At sites that qualify for VPP participation, employers and employees work together and in partnership with OSHA to provide a level of safety and health protection that goes well beyond minimum OSHA standards. While the VPP has been open to private companies for some time, it opened to applications from Federal agency sites with exemplary safety and health programs in November 1997. There are three types of VPP certification, Star, Merit, and Demonstration. Langley seeks Star certification.

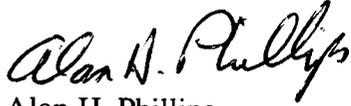
STAR participants meet all VPP requirements. Star certification is targeted for work sites with comprehensive, successful safety and health programs. Star work sites are in the forefront of employee protection, as indicated by three-year average incidence and lost workday case rates at or below the national average for their industry. They must also have in-place robust safety and health program management systems.

At the beginning of August 1998, OSEMA will submit Langley's VPP application to OSHA. The next critical step for Langley will occur September 21-25, 1998, when OSHA safety specialists and industrial hygienists will thoroughly examine our work sites to identify the types of hazardous conditions that exist at Langley, and to gain a better feel for how well our safety and health program works across the Center. They will be acting in a non-enforcement mode. The OSHA team will examine safety records to verify Langley's implementation of its safety and health program. They will visit many work areas, and they will both formally and informally interview randomly selected employees and contractors, when applicable, about the VPP. Those who are interviewed must be able to explain what the VPP is and what it means for NASA Langley as well as how the Langley safety program applies to them. If OSHA's on-site inspectors find that Langley employees do not understand the safety program as it applies to their job, Langley's safety and health program will not be certified.

POST THIS SAFETY ALERT ON YOUR FACILITY BULLETIN BOARD FOR A
MINIMUM OF 30 DAYS.

Participation in the VPP does not strip employees or unions of their rights to OSHA protection. OSHA states that its VPP onsite inspections are more thorough than compliance inspections. In addition, employee union business agents are required to declare their approval of the site's participation in the VPP in writing or the site may not participate.

Additional information about the Langley VPP effort and your part in it will be provided in additional e-mails over the next several weeks. Information can also be obtained by visiting the OSHA VPP homepage at <http://www.osha.gov/oshprogs/vpp/> or by calling OSEMA's Dave Barker, extension 43406.



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