

# NEWSRELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JUNE 19, 2009**

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## **VPPPA SUPPORTS GAO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OSHA'S VPP**

FALLS CHURCH, VA – The Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association, Inc. (VPPPA) supports the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) May 2009 assessment that, "improved oversight and control would better ensure program quality." This conclusion is in response to a congressional request to review the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP).

"The association has always advocated the importance of a stringent approval process and thorough controls insuring the integrity of VPP," said VPPPA Executive Director R. Davis Layne. "VPPPA welcomes the opportunity to work with OSHA to validate the important role of VPP in workplace safety and health."

Previously in 2004, a similar GAO report stated, "OSHA's voluntary compliance programs appear to have yielded many positive outcomes ... Employers and employees at nine worksites we visited attested to reductions in injuries and illnesses and improved relationships with one another and with OSHA."

The recently released 2009 GAO report recommends that the Secretary of Labor direct OSHA to (1) develop a documentation policy for information on actions taken by OSHA's regions in response to fatalities and serious injuries at VPP sites, (2) establish internal controls that ensure consistent compliance by its regions with VPP policies, and (3) develop goals and performance measures for the VPP.

Appropriate funding of VPP would address the recommendations made by the GAO. The association is pleased that President Obama has proposed over \$563 million for OSHA's FY 2010 budget, with an increase of approximately \$45 million for federal enforcement and an increase of nearly \$2 million for federal compliance assistance.

Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Jordan Barab has accepted VPPPA's invitation to speak at the Opening General Session of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual National VPPPA Conference this August 24-27, 2009, in San Antonio, Texas. The association looks forward to Acting Assistant Secretary Barab's comments and proposals in response to the 2009 GAO report and welcomes the opportunity to work with OSHA to ensure that only qualified worksites participate in VPP.

VPPPA, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, is dedicated to promoting advances in worker safety and health excellence through cooperation among communities, workers, industries and governments. The nearly 2,000 VPPPA member sites primarily consist of worksites that have been approved, or are seeking approval, into VPP as administered by OSHA, state-plan OSHA and the Department of Energy.

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