 Conference Promotes Farm Safety and Health

"Staying Afloat" is the theme of the 2008 Midwest Rural and Agricultural Safety and Health Forum, to be held November 20-21 at the Radisson Quad City Plaza in Davenport. The meeting is hosted by Iowa's Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (I-CASH) and the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health. Both Centers are based in the UI College of Public Health. Participants will obtain updated information on federal health initiatives for rural health, rural roadway safety, youth safety, personal protective equipment, and agricultural injury and illness surveillance. Registration discounts are available to farmers and students.

I-CASH (Midwest Rural and Agricultural Safety and Health Forum) - www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/programs/MRASH/2008/index.htm (or contact Eileen Fisher at 319/335-4224)

 Tuckpointing Hazard Prevention

NIOSH posted a new "Workplace Solutions" report in September that explains research conducted by a University of Iowa College of Public Health professor and his doctoral student. Drs. Bill Heitbrink and Scott Collingwood studied construction workers who grind or cut mortar or cement from between the bricks of old buildings. That work, known as tuckpointing, can expose them to high concentrations of crystalline silica, which has been linked to disorders such as lung cancer, kidney disease, or reduced lung function. The study showed that the workers' hazardous dust exposures could be reduced with a tool-mounted industrial vacuum cleaner and specific work practices.


 Current DOT Procedures for Specimen Collection

The US Department of Transportation's Office of Drug & Alcohol Policy & Compliance (ODAPC) now has a printable "handout" listing DOT's direct observation procedures for urine specimen collection. Besides collectors and observers, the handout may be useful to employers, employees, and Medical Review Officers.

ODAPC (DOT's direct observation procedures) - www.dot.gov/ost/dapc/testingpubs/DOT_Direct_Observation_Procedures_08-08.pdf

 It's That Time: Flu Vaccine

The CDC recommends getting your flu shot as soon as the vaccine is available, which will be soon. This timing may be most important for children being vaccinated against flu for the first time, since they need to get two doses of vaccine at least 4 weeks apart. Each year CDC researchers work to determine the flu strains that will cause the most illness and they match the vaccine to those viruses. Fortunately even when the vaccine is not optimally matched, the antibodies made in response to vaccination with one strain can provide protection against different but related strains. And here's more good news: post-flu-season studies show that the vaccines have been well matched to the predominant circulating viruses in 16 of the last 20 years.

CDC (2008-2009 Flu Season) - www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/index.htm
For information on availability and scheduling of vaccinations, contact UI HealthWorks at 319/665-2111.