

NAVAL WEAPONS STATION CHARLESTON AWARDED OSHA VPP STAR STATUS



WPNSTA CHASN
"We enable warfighter readiness"

In late 2005, OSHA conducted a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) assessment of Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Charleston, which resulted in the base being recognized as a VPP Merit Site [see success story at http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/Pages/osh/Safety%20Success%20stories/safety_success_stories_home.aspx].

The VPP Merit award designation indicated that NWS Charleston had "good safety and health management systems" and had demonstrated the potential and the commitment to meet (within three years) goals tailored for them by OSHA to become a *Star* site - the highest VPP participation category.

VPP demonstrates cooperative action among government, industry, and labor



to address worker safety and health issues and expand worker protection. VPP participation requirements center on a comprehensive safety and health management system with active employee involvement to prevent or control safety and health hazards at the worksite. The VPP *Star* award designation indicates that the organization receiving the award has successfully demonstrated ongoing planning,

implementation, integration, and control of four interdependent elements:

- Management Leadership & Employee Involvement
- Worksite Analysis
- Hazard Prevention & Control
- Safety and Health Training.

NWS Charleston had demonstrated the potential and commitment to provide excellent safety and health protection, and while receiving Merit recognition was commendable, their goal was to achieve Star. Therefore, management and employees renewed their commitment and continued to strive for OSHA's top tier recognition as a VPP Star site.

A designated *Star* site must have had all of its occupational safety and health program elements operating effectively for at least one year, and its three-year injury and illness rates compared to a like industry class in the private sector must be below the national average published annually by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for that industry. Injury and illness history for a site is evaluated using a three-year total case incident rate (TCIR) and a three-year day away, restricted, and/or transfer case (DART) incident rate.

NWS Charleston’s mishap statistics for the period of 2006-2008 were:

- 3-year TCIR is 1.7, which is 73% below the 2007 BLS industry average for North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 561200.
- 3-year DART case incidence rate is 1.1, which is 58% below the 2007 BLS industry average for NAICS 561200.

Year	Hours	Total # of Cases	TCIR	No. Cases Days Away from Work, Restricted Activity or Job Transfer	DART Rate
2006	706,360	5	1.4	4	1.1
2007	865,260	8	1.9	6	1.4
2008	900,000	8	1.8	4	0.9
Total	2,471,620	21		14	
Three-Year Rate (2006-2008)			1.7		1.1
___ 2005 BLS Rates for NAICS ___					
___ 2006 BLS Rates for NAICS ___					
x 2007 BLS Rates for NAICS _561200_			6.2		2.6

The site experienced an increase in recordables from 2006 to 2007. This is thought to be the result of improved employee hazard recognition and better reporting of injuries and illnesses. Hazard analysis indicated that the most common recordable injuries and illnesses involved sprains/strains, cuts, and abrasions. The most common body parts injured were hands and backs.

The following examples illustrate the types of actions taken by Naval Weapons Station Charleston toward attaining VPP Star recognition:

- Command leaders kept the press on to ensure Merit goals set by OSHA for NWS Charleston were completed in a timely fashion and that management and employees remained focused and dedicated.
- NWS Charleston employees participated in safety and health programs through worker safety and health committees, prompt reporting of unsafe/unhealthful work practices, safety participation and training, supervisor and employee safety self-inspections, as well as ensuring compliance with applicable standards.
- Focus was placed on wellness training and work conditioning for employees in Fire Department and Morale, Wellness, and Recreation Department where the majority of recordables were experienced.
- Continued to focus on having employees develop and review Job Hazard Analyses to improve hazard awareness and help reduce occurrences.

In 2008, the DoD VPP Center of Excellence was invited to NWS Charleston to conduct an evaluation of random safety and health programs, documentation, employee interviews, and on-site inspections. Based on their sampling, it appeared that NWS Charleston was ready for OSHA's re-inspection.

In January 2009, OSHA returned to NWS Charleston for a re-inspection. Upon completing the inspection, NWS Charleston was recommended for VPP Star. OSHA noted improvements in documentation, a greater focus on hazard recognition and increased management/ employee inspections. In addition, OSHA inspectors complimented the Command staff for their heavy involvement and for maintaining such high visibility in the workplace during 2008 and during their assessment.

Achieving the VPP Star illustrates NWS Charleston's excellence in Safety and Health programs and demonstrates the commitment and involvement of the station's employees and management. While it was an overall team effort, the importance of management involvement was paramount.



Flag raising ceremony on 14 September 2009 recognized WPNSTA Charleston as VPP Star site.

“Employees often model what they perceive upper management is modeling,” said NWS Charleston Safety Director Rick Dangerfield. He expressed appreciation to the Command Staff and Department Heads stating, “Without weekly involvement from upper management ensuring adequate resources and leadership, NWS Charleston could not have obtained the coveted Star designation.”

An official flag raising ceremony was conducted on 14 September 2009 recognizing NWS Charleston as a VPP Star site.

"This noteworthy achievement of Star places NWS Charleston in an elite group of organizations that provide exemplary occupational safety and health protection and we now serve as a model for others," said Dangerfield.



Proudly displaying VPP Star banner are L to R: Command Master Chief Mike Jackson, Safety Specialist Steve Gagat, Employee Safety Committee Chair Kama Bentley, OSHA Region IV Director Ms. Suzanne Street, NWS Charleston Executive Officer LCDR Gary Martin and Commanding Officer Captain Glen Little.

Submarine Base Kings Bay in Georgia, Naval Station Mayport and Naval Air Station Key West in Florida.

[see additional VPP success stories at

<http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/success/all.htm#Voluntary>]

For more information on OSHA’s Voluntary Protection Program, how to qualify, a VPP eligibility checklist, and a VPP application, visit these websites:

OSHA VPP Guidance

<http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/vpp>

VPP Participants’ Association

<http://www.vpppa.org/>

VPP Eligibility Checklist

NWS Charleston Commanding Officer Captain Glen Little expressed appreciation for the past two years of necessary hard work, which brought forth this historical accomplishment.

"This is an amazing achievement. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the whole VPP process. This is a direct reflection of your efforts," said Little.

NWS Charleston is only the fourth base out of 26 in the Navy’s Southeast Region to achieve the Star level, and now joins the ranks of Naval

<http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/vpp/vppflyer.pdf>

VPP Application Form

http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/vpp/corporate/vpp_cfap_template.html#II

Naval Safety Center VPP Guidance

<http://safetycenter.navy.mil/osh/shore/VPP.htm>

DoD VPP Center of Excellence (CX)

<http://www.vppcx.org/>