



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY  
AND  
ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF VIRGINIA**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **VOSH AND THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF VIRGINIA ANNOUNCE VIRGINIA BEST STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

**RICHMOND, VA** – The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program and the Associated General Contractors of Virginia (AGCVA) have entered into a strategic partnership to bring a first in the nation - Virginia BEST Program (**B**uilding **E**xcellence in **S**afety, Health and **T**raining) to AGCVA members.

Virginia BEST is designed to encourage and recognize AGCVA members who voluntarily implement highly effective safety and health management systems to benefit construction workers and reduce or eliminate injuries, illnesses and fatalities on construction sites in Virginia.

Commissioner of Labor and Industry C. Ray Davenport and Mike Cagle, Chairman of the Board for the AGCVA, signed a strategic partnership agreement on October 13, 2016. "We applaud the AGCVA for undertaking this first of its kind partnership with the VOSH Program to recognize AGCVA members who implement safety and health management systems that protect construction workers and set a standard of achievement for the construction industry in Virginia", said Davenport.

"Safe jobsites are the most crucial component of construction work. Virginia BEST is designed to reduce employee injuries, improve employee morale and position AGCVA members to be more competitive by becoming the best in class construction companies. This historic program will be the model as every state will want to follow Virginia's lead in the Virginia BEST program", said AGCVA's Cagle.

Core elements of the Virginia BEST Program include:

- 1) Management Leadership and Employee Involvement
- 2) Worksite Analysis
- 3) Hazard Prevention and Control
- 4) Safety and Health Training

Three levels of participation in Virginia BEST are provided:

Level 1 - The basic achievement level in the Virginia BEST program for applicants that develop and implement an effective safety and health management system that meets current VOSH regulatory requirements.

Level 2 - The intermediate achievement level in the Virginia BEST program for applicants having an established safety and health management system that exceeds current VOSH regulatory requirements.

Level 3 - The highest achievement level in the Virginia BEST program for applicants having an exceptional safety and health management system that serves as a model for other construction employers.

Benefits are provided commensurate with the level of participation in Virginia BEST. Participants that achieve Level Three recognition will receive an exemption from planned construction inspections from the VOSH Program, which allows VOSH to focus its limited compliance resources on high injury and illness rate employers.

Construction contractors that participate in Virginia BEST will substantially improve safety and health protections for Virginia workers through cooperative efforts to reduce injuries, illnesses and fatal accidents. Virginia BEST participants will implement safety and health management systems which have consistently demonstrated decreased bottom line costs associated with dramatically reduced injury and illness rates and improved productivity and employee morale and retention. Reducing private sector employer costs associated with injuries, illnesses and fatal accidents enhances a company's economic viability and competitiveness, and increases available capital for reinvestment, expansion and new hiring.

Costs avoided include workers' compensation charges, insurance premium increases, property damage, production downtime, employee replacement and retraining, and litigation expenses.

For more information on the Virginia BEST Program:

[http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh\\_enforcement/BEST\\_program.html](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh_enforcement/BEST_program.html)

Contact Allen Hatch, Virginia BEST Coordinator, at 540-248-9280, ext. 15, or at

[allen.hatch@doli.virginia.gov](mailto:allen.hatch@doli.virginia.gov)

For more information on the best practices for preventing fatalities, injuries and illnesses:

[http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh\\_enforcement/fatalities\\_intro.html](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh_enforcement/fatalities_intro.html)

A Media Packet for the VOSH Program can be found at:  
[http://www.doli.virginia.gov/media\\_room/vosh\\_media\\_packet\\_files/VOSH%20Media%20Packet\\_FINAL\\_08.03.2016.pdf](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/media_room/vosh_media_packet_files/VOSH%20Media%20Packet_FINAL_08.03.2016.pdf)

The Associated General Contractors of Virginia is the largest and most influential construction trade association in the Commonwealth. Comprised of more than 600 member firms including general contractors, subcontractors, material suppliers and service providers, AGCVA is focused upon jobsite safety, workforce development, legislative and regulatory representation and educational programs to keep members and their employees current on the latest challenges facing the construction industry. For more information contact, Gordon Dixon at 804-364-5504.

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry offers two other voluntary protection recognition programs, the [Virginia Voluntary Protection Program](#) (VPP) generally for larger fixed site employers and the [Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program](#) (SHARP) for businesses of 250 employees or fewer. Both programs recognize Virginia employers that develop and implement exceptional safety and health management systems for their employees. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at [www.doli.virginia.gov](http://www.doli.virginia.gov) or for VPP - contact Milford Stern, VPP Program Manager, at 540-562-3580, ext. 123, or [milford.stern@doli.virginia.gov](mailto:milford.stern@doli.virginia.gov) and for SHARP – contact, Warren Rice, Director of Cooperative Programs, at 804-786-6613 or [warren.rice@doli.virginia.gov](mailto:warren.rice@doli.virginia.gov).

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry also offers [On-Site Consultation Services](#) to help employers better understand and voluntarily comply with VOSH standards. Priority is given to high hazard workplaces with 250 or fewer employees and all services are offered to employers at no cost. On-Site Consultation Services helps employers identify and correct potential safety and health hazards through walk-through surveys (without citations or penalties), provide abatement advice, provide on-site training, and provide program assistance to develop safety and health programs. Additional information about On-Site Consultation Services can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at [www.doli.virginia.gov](http://www.doli.virginia.gov) or by contacting Warren Rice, Director of Cooperative Programs, at 804-786-6613 or [warren.rice@doli.virginia.gov](mailto:warren.rice@doli.virginia.gov).

The Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program is financed with 50% state funds and 50% federal funds in the form of a grant from the U. S. Department of Labor – OSHA, under §23(g) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

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