



June 9, 2009

IAM at Forefront of Airline Safety Efforts

The Machinists continue to lead the fight in helping to ensure a safer work environment for the men and women employed at our nation's airlines. Starting next month, The IAM Occupational Safety and Health Department will begin the process of training airline workers in the handling and transporting of hazardous materials. The safety program was made possible by a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

A report released by DOT shows there were more than 1,200 air incidents involving hazardous materials last year. "Creating safer workplaces and erasing the number of work-related injuries each year remains one of our chief priorities in the transportation industry," says IAM Transportation General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr. "Airline workers come across a lot of potentially hazardous chemicals throughout their day and need to know the proper procedures for handling such substances. With this grant, the IAM is able to provide our members with information to protect their health and safety on the job."

IAM Occupational Safety and Health Director Michael Flynn oversees the implementation of the grant. He and his staff developed the curriculum and specialized course materials that will be used on site at each of the participating airlines. A group of 20 United Airline workers are expected to take part in the first session at the William W. Winpisinger Education & Technology Center in July.

"All the companies have their existing training in place," says Flynn. "This doesn't replace it, rather it augments it. Our members are training our members, which is really the cornerstone of all the IAM's training. Our members better relate to people who have rolled their sleeves up and worked with them."

Flynn says DOT contacted the IAM about the grant last year because of the Machinists' outstanding track record in worker safety and the IAM's Corporation for Re-Employment and Safety Training (C.R.E.S.T.) services. Planning has already begun for a continuation and expansion of the grant for next year.