

ICON issues review of nanotechnology practices

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The International Council on Nanotechnology (ICON) today issued a comprehensive review of existing efforts to develop "best practices" for handling nanomaterials in the workplace.

The work was performed by researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) as part of a two-phase project to catalogue how industry is managing the potential occupational safety risks posed by nanomaterials.

The report can be found at icon.rice.edu .

ICON, which paid for both phases of the project, is a coalition of academic, industrial, governmental and civil society organizations. ICON is administered by Rice University's Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology (CBEN).

The Phase 1 report, "Current Knowledge and Practices regarding Environmental Health and Safety in the Nanotechnology Workplace," offers a review and analysis of existing efforts to develop "best practices." This report finds that efforts to catalogue workplace practices have not systematically documented current environment, health and safety practices in a variety of workplace settings and geographies. Moreover, it finds that some existing documents are not publicly available.

In the second phase of this project, the researchers interviewed a range

of U.S. and international firms to produce an international snapshot of workplace practices in nanotechnology industries. ICON plans to issue a report of those findings Nov. 13.

"This first report shows the need for better information about how industries are dealing with the unknowns about nanomaterials," said ICON director Kristen Kulinowski. "The phase-two survey will shed light on existing practices so that a global dialogue can move forward on safe handling practices."

Source: Rice University

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