



December 21, 2017

The Honorable Alexander Acosta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2016

Dear Secretary Acosta:

We were saddened to see the release of the [2016 Fatal Occupational Injuries report](#) showing a 7 percent increase in fatalities to 5,190. We know that working together, we can have a strong impact in saving lives and preventing injuries in workplaces. The National Safety Council (NSC) is a 100-year-old nonprofit committed to eliminating preventable deaths in our lifetime by focusing on injuries in workplaces, on the roads, and in homes and communities. Our more than 13,500 member companies represent employees at more than 50,000 U.S. worksites. Many of these worksites are subject to Department of Labor (DOL) oversight.

NSC focuses on worker safety, transportation safety and fighting the opioid epidemic—all widespread problems that impact workplaces and are represented in the fatality numbers. We offer the following avenues for working with the Department of Labor.

Roadway Transportation Safety

Transportation-related fatalities were the leading cause of occupational fatalities in 2016. While DOL does not have jurisdiction over transportation systems, there is more DOL can do to educate employers about this reality. NSC recently celebrated the one-year anniversary of the [Road to Zero](#) (RTZ) coalition, a partnership of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) focused on the shared goal of eliminating roadway deaths by 2050. In one year, the coalition has over 500 unique members from industry, government, academia, nonprofits, survivor advocates and more. Other governmental organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health are active with Road to Zero, and I encourage DOL and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to join RTZ.

The Council also offers a free [NSC Safe Driving Kit](#) to help employers address a variety of roadway issues. This kit:



- Helps safety and human resource professionals build senior management support for policies and education to influence safer driving behaviors
- Provides policies and educational materials that look at the top factors in fatal crashes: distraction, alcohol, drugs and fatigue
- Contains myriad safe driving resources and ready-made communication tools to educate employees, including videos, fact sheets and FAQs, infographics, posters, survivor advocate stories and more

We encourage you to share this ready-made kit as another tool employers can use to address the leading cause of workplace death.

Opioid Epidemic

NSC has been working on the opioid epidemic for years. From the beginning, our work has a primary focus on defining and supporting the employer role in addressing this epidemic. Our free [Prescription Drug Employer Kit](#) is designed to help employers establish policies and manage opioid use at work. The kit contains many great resources, including:

- The Proactive Role Employers Can Take: Opioids in the Workplace, a comprehensive white paper, including information on education, training and testing
- Prescription Pain Medications: A Fatal Cure for Injured Workers, a report examining workers' compensation court rulings when injured workers overdose on opioid pain medications prescribed for their occupation injury
- Resources for updating drug-free workplace programs
- Information on structuring benefits, including group health insurance, to include support for those suffering from SUDs
- Survivor advocate stories sharing the importance of vigilance and action
- Posters, safety talks and other educational materials for communicating the dangers of opioids and addiction with employees

We encourage you to make use of the [Prescription Drug Employer Kit](#) as you develop best practices on substance use disorders in the workplace. Important employer programs like employee assistance programs, health and wellness and recovery are addressed in the toolkit, providing a solid and proven evidence-based foundation on which to build without reinventing the wheel.

Earlier this year, we released a [Substance Use Cost Calculator](#) to help employers understand the cost of addiction in their businesses. It is a tool that allows businesses to input basic statistics about their workforce such as industry, location and number of employees. The results show estimated prevalence of substance use disorders among employees and dependents, associated costs and potential savings if employees and their family members treat substance use disorders, helping to make the business case for action. Developed through scientific



analysis, the Substance Use Cost Calculator provides the individual costs of alcohol, prescription pain medication, marijuana and illicit drug use. As you work to encourage employers large and small to take further action, we hope you will consider using this tool in making your case.

Workplace Violence

Recently, NSC developed a free [active shooter community training](#) tool. This tool has been used in several communities to better inform them of what to do when unexpected violence strikes. We recommend that communities across the country access this free tool to provide some base level of training for this type of emergency.

Additionally, at the NSC Congress and Expo in 2016, we held a session on workplace violence. We welcome an opportunity to continue that conversation by pulling together a roundtable with DOL to discuss this topic, including training and other resources that would benefit employers should violence strikes.

NSC looks forward to working with you and employers to keep workers safe and healthy. Any fatality is one too many.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DAPH", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deborah A.P. Hersman
President & CEO

cc: Loren Sweatt, Acting Assistant Secretary, OSHA