

# OSHA

## UP TO DATE®



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## OSHA grant aimed at training teens on workplace violence

Peer-to-peer training can help teach teens about hazards on the job, including workplace violence, OSHA administrator David Michaels said during a June 24 press event featuring a number of teen peer leaders from across the country.

OSHA announced it provided a safety training grant for Teens Lead @ Work, a national network of peer education programs founded by four state occupational safety coalitions and the University of California, Berkeley. The program trains teens to educate their peers and co-workers on how to recognize and prevent workplace violence.

"This is a unique opportunity to reach out to young workers with lifesaving information," Michaels said. "Of course, it's the employer's responsibility to provide a safe workplace. But educating young workers to identify hazardous situations can give them the confidence they need to speak up at work and ask for the training and protections they need to be safe."

Teens face a variety of hazards at work, according to OSHA. As many as 200,000 young workers are sexually assaulted each year on the job, the agency said, citing a recent study by

the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University. The event also highlighted a number of incidents in which teens were shot and killed while working.

### Peer training

Often, little or no workplace violence training is available for young workers, according to OSHA. The agency pointed to a survey of teen retail workers conducted by the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health that showed 74 percent of teens never received training on workplace violence or health and safety, and 27 percent had experienced a theft at the workplace. Additionally, nearly one-third of young workers sometimes worked without supervision.

The Teens Lead @ Work program aims to train more than 500 workers

15-22 years old and at least 30 small retail businesses this year before expanding next year, Justin Caballero, a teen safety peer educator at MassCOSH, said during the press conference.

The training sessions – which at press time were scheduled to occur during the summer in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco – will include information about rights and responsibilities. Peer educators will use role play and discussions to share instructions on responding to common hazards, such as how to reduce the risk of violence during robberies at retail stores. One peer educator hoped the training would help young workers learn to "be mindful, be watchful and beware" on the job.

"It is very effective because youths are willing to listen to their peers," Caballero said.

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## OSHA issues safety tips for tree care, orchard workers

OSHA has published a bulletin that outlines serious hazards present in tree care work.

Released June 16, the bulletin addresses how to help prevent injuries and deaths from falls and falling objects during tree care work.

Two fatal incidents – a struck-by and a fall – are described in the bulletin, which also lists safety precautions for tree care business owners. The safety tips include:

- Assess the site for fall and falling object hazards.
- Have a qualified arborist survey the site.
- Determine if workers will need to climb or use aerial lifts.
- Take steps to protect workers from falling object hazards.
- Establish visual and audible communications with workers.
- Have emergency procedures in place.

“Too many tree care workers are being hurt or killed by well-known industry dangers that can be prevented if employers take the necessary precautions,” OSHA administrator David Michaels said in a press release. “Employers have a responsibility to ensure workers are protected on the job – this includes providing training and making sure workers have the right tools to stay safe.”

### Orchard ladder safety

Meanwhile, employers of fruit pickers and landscapers have new resources – in both English and Spanish – to help keep workers safe on and near tripod orchard ladders.

An OSHA fact sheet and QuickCard detail the types of hazards ladders pose and list the precautions employers should take to prevent worker injuries.

According to the fact sheet, falls are the most common hazard, and many occur on the upper part of the ladder. Fall hazards can be prevented by placing the ladder firmly on the ground, routinely inspecting the ladder and not overfilling produce bags.

In addition, the fact sheet recommends that workers move ladders to perform orchard work instead of reaching beyond the ladder’s side rails, and carry ladders in a horizontal position.

The agency stressed that a tripod orchard ladder is for orchard use only, that only one worker should be allowed on a ladder at a time, and any ladder with defects should be removed from service.

Both the tree care bulletin and the tripod orchard ladder resources can be found at [www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.html](http://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.html).

## ASK THE EXPERT

with Rick Kaletsky

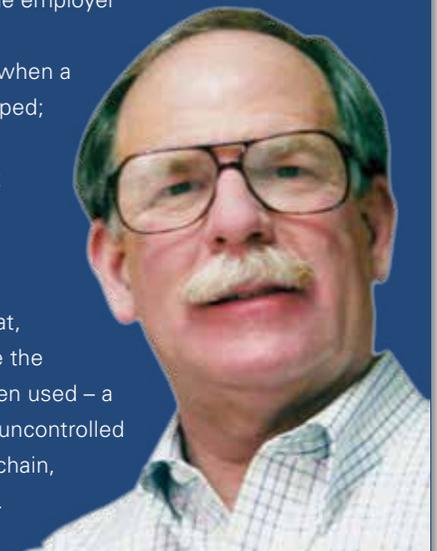
**Q:** Would you accept “carelessness” (on the part of the victim) as the main cause listed on an accident investigation report?

**A:** Not in itself. Be specific. Did he run down stairs or fail to put a guard back on a machine? Did she forgo wearing required personal protective equipment or hold a tool incorrectly? Say John was injured by tripping on a loose item on the floor. The foreperson labels “carelessness” as the reason and stops there. Someone adds, “He didn’t look where he was going” (an explanation that can have merit).

Yet if John trips on a pipe on an aisle floor, other factors must be examined. How did the pipe get there? Was it dropped? If so, did the “dropper” realize it? If so, why didn’t he pick it up? How many people saw it but didn’t pick it up?

Did it fall from a structure above, or from a cart or forklift? Had it been carried precariously? Does the employer provide a place to store pipes?

Marie’s eye was severely injured when a bungee cord she was handling snapped; it did not break. Some employers may rush to “carelessness” without investigating. But, again, important questions need to be asked. Why weren’t safety glasses worn? Why wasn’t the cord used in a way so that, even if recoiled, it would not strike the face? Could another device have been used – a type in which tension is relieved so uncontrolled springing doesn’t occur? Perhaps a chain, rope or similar binding could suffice.



Former OSHA inspector-turned-consultant **Rick Kaletsky** is a 43-year veteran of the safety industry. He is the author of “OSHA Inspections: Preparation and Response,” published by the National Safety Council. Now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, the book has been updated and expanded. Order a copy at [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org), and contact Kaletsky with safety questions at [safehealth@nsc.org](mailto:safehealth@nsc.org).

## In Other News...

### OSHA delays enforcement of electrical rule

OSHA has delayed enforcement of recently revised standards pertaining to electric power generation, transmission and distribution installations.

The new electrical safety requirements went into effect July 10, but OSHA announced it was not enforcing compliance until Oct. 31. OSHA's revised standards are intended to better protect workers on or near electric power lines by bringing the agency's construction standard for electric power line work more in line with the general industry standard.

OSHA's updated standards also include new or revised requirements for fall protection, minimum approach distances, arc-flash protection, and electrical protective equipment for both construction and general industry.

### OSHA seeks to improve testing laboratory program

OSHA is requesting input from stakeholders on how to increase the effectiveness of its Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory Program.

NRTLs are independent laboratories that perform safety tests and certifications for workplace products. They must meet certain requirements to obtain OSHA recognition.

Prompted by a 2012 Government Accountability Office report that suggested various changes to the NRTL program's accreditation process, OSHA scheduled a stakeholder meeting for Oct. 22 in Washington. The meeting will focus on the idea of using the private sector to improve the timelines and efficiency of the NRTL recognition process.

For additional information on the NRTL program, go to [www.osha.gov/dts/otpc/nrtl](http://www.osha.gov/dts/otpc/nrtl).

## OSHA STANDARD INTERPRETATIONS

*OSHA requirements are set by statute, standards and regulations. Interpretation letters explain these requirements and how they apply to particular circumstances, but they cannot create additional employer obligations. Enforcement guidance may be affected by changes to OSHA rules.*

### Clarification regarding hazard access zones in steel erection

**Standard:** 1926.760(d)(1), 1926.502(f)(2)

**Date of response:** June 19, 2014

**QUESTION:** Does OSHA recognize the use of hazard access zones (HAZ) as an acceptable method to protect ironworkers who work in or near unfinished floor openings while performing steel erection work?

**ANSWER:** You describe a HAZ as a system that limits access to unfinished floors to ironworkers engaged in steel erection activities. The system requires the use of cones and extendable rails placed at least six (6) feet from unfinished floor openings that extend a minimum of twenty-eight (28) inches above a walking/working surface. A competent person must inspect the system each shift and the employer must provide special training for affected workers.

As described, this system does not comply with the requirements of Subpart R. For OSHA to allow the use of such a system, the Agency would require evidence that a HAZ, as described, eliminates or materially reduces the hazards as effectively as the Subpart R steel erection standards. At this time, OSHA does not believe that allowing the use of the HAZ you describe would be as protective of workers as the requirements of Subpart R.

However, on May 12, 2000, OSHA responded to a question regarding the use of a non-conforming guardrail system. In that letter OSHA announced that it would apply a de minimis policy for non-conforming guardrails where a warning line 15 or more feet from the edge or hole (in the case of a hole, measured from the nearest edge of the hole), when combined with effective work rules, would protect workers from unprotected sides or edges. Specifically, OSHA considers the use of certain physical barriers that fail to meet the criteria for a guardrail a de minimis violation of the guardrail criteria in 1926.760(d)(1) only when all of the following conditions are met:

1. A warning line is used 15 feet or more from the edge (or nearest edge of a hole);
2. The warning line meets or exceeds the requirements in 1926.502(f)(2);
3. No work or work-related activity is to take place in the area between the warning line and the hole or edge; and
4. The employer effectively implements a work rule prohibiting the employees from going past the warning line.

Thus, steel erection employers not protecting workers with a warning line system must fully comply with the fall protection and floor holes and openings provisions of Subpart R.

**James G. Maddux**

Director of the Directorate of Construction

*Excerpted from:*

[www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p\\_id=29123](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p_id=29123)

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## OSHA releases MSD-prevention brochure for nursing home workers

A new OSHA brochure lays out how to implement a safe patient-handling program to help reduce or prevent musculoskeletal disorders among nursing home and residential care workers.

Nursing and residential care facilities reported 237 injuries and illnesses per 10,000 full-time workers in 2012 – a rate more than double that of the manufacturing industry, according to OSHA. Nearly half of the injuries were MSDs, the agency added.

The brochure lists the benefits of a safe patient-handling program – including reduced injury costs and fewer patient falls – as well as the elements OSHA believes are necessary for a successful program:

- Management commitment

- A safe patient-handling committee involving front-line workers
- Hazard assessment
- Technology and Prevention through Design
- Education and training
- Program evaluation

“Musculoskeletal injuries are the single biggest worker injury in the health care sector,” OSHA administrator David Michaels said in a press release. “This new resource will help make employers and workers aware of the activities that pose the greatest hazards to workers who care for residents in nursing homes and residential care industries and what can be done to decrease risks to these workers.”

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