

Statement of Lorraine Martin
CEO of the National Safety Council
Before the House Education and Workforce Committee
Workforce Protections Subcommittee
"Building a Safer Future: Private-Sector Strategies for Emerging Safety Issues"
May 13, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Chairs Mackenzie and Walberg and Ranking Members Omar and Scott, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me to this important hearing titled: Building a Safer Future: Private-Sector Strategies for Emerging Safety Issues.

About the National Safety Council

My name is Lorraine Martin and I serve as the CEO of the National Safety Council, America's leading nonprofit safety advocate since 1913. We were formed in the wake of the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911 to promote the safety of human life in the industries of the United States. From the Council's earliest "Safety First" educational efforts, to our Click It or Ticket national campaigns on seatbelt use, for over a century NSC has been at the forefront of major initiatives setting the national conversation on occupational and roadway safety. Building on this legacy, NSC advocates for advancing common sense, consensus-focused safety standards and innovations that save lives at scale, with a focus on eliminating the leading causes of preventable injuries and deaths in the workplace and on the roadways. Our more than 13,000 members represent a diverse range of businesses, labor organizations and public agencies spanning roughly 41,000 U.S. worksites.

The Toll of Unsafe Workplaces

The National Safety Council calls for bold, decisive action to equip employers with the research, tools and practices needed to protect workers from preventable injury and death. While workplace fatality rates have dropped significantly since the early 20th century, progress has mostly stalled in recent years. According to NSC *Injury Facts*®, roughly 4,337 workers died from preventable incidents in 2024, and nearly 4 million suffered injuries requiring medical care.¹ That equates to an average of 12 workers dying and roughly 10,800 suffering injuries on the job each day. Additionally, in 2024, occupational injuries cost the United States economy \$181.4 billion.² These are not just statistics. These figures represent the people, families and communities impacted when someone loses their life or sustains a life-altering injury at work. To bend the trendline down, NSC advocates for a landmark shift in occupational safety

¹ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/work-overview/work-safety-introduction/>

² <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/costs/work-injury-costs/>

measurement: moving from reactive measures to proactive prevention that enables employers to not only meet safety requirements but to embed safety and worker wellbeing into everyday operations. In this testimony, I will highlight some of the innovative work being done by the National Safety Council to achieve this.

I. WE CAN IMPROVE HOW WE MEASURE SAFETY DATA

A fundamental challenge in workplace safety is that we often measure past outcomes rather than future risk. Safety efforts have traditionally focused on what *has* already occurred, instead of identifying hazards and preventing serious injuries and fatalities *before* they occur. Historically, companies have shown safety performance through Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) total recordable injury rates (TRIR) and post-incident reviews, but these “lagging” indicators often paint an incomplete picture. While recordable rates have slowly trended downward, serious injuries and fatalities (SIFs) have remained essentially flat over the past decade.³ The Deepwater Horizon tragedy is a prime example of how injury counts can mask severe underlying risks. On the day of the tragedy in 2010, the crew was celebrating its low lagging metrics. Today, we know how the story ends: 11 dead workers and the largest marine oil spill in history.

In 2024, 4,337 people died in preventable workplace incidents, or 2.9 workers per 100,000, while 4,132 individuals died in 2014, at the same rate of 2.9 workers per 100,000. At the same time, TRIR fell from 3.2 per 100 workers to 2.3 — a decline of more than 28%. Many businesses, both large and small, use TRIR as their primary measure of safety performance. It is undeniable that more fatalities at work with a lower recordable rate does not mean workplaces are safer today than they were ten years ago.

It is time to rethink how workplaces, and even OSHA, measure safety performance across worksites nationwide. If we are truly committed to eliminating SIFs, we must unite around proactive safety performance measures that prioritize hazard identification, implementation of controls, effective and efficient communication with teams, and engineering potentially fatal hazards out of the work when feasible.

Harnessing Leading Indicators

The alarming difference in workplace safety trends underscores the urgency of integrating predictive, or “leading indicators,” that consist of preventative measures designed to control hazards, into how workplace safety is measured. Leading indicators shift the attention of safety professionals and everyday employees to proactive “hazard hunting.” Leading indicators also provide early situational awareness of potential SIFs (pSIFs), prompting preventative measures to control hazards, and promote a culture of continuous improvement between safety leaders and workers. Leading indicators include: risk assessments; hazard identification, recognition, and control verification;

³ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/industry-incidence-rates/work-related-incident-rate-trends/>

safety communication; training; compliance; and other metrics. Leading indicators should be the primary tools used for reducing risk and tracking progress towards safety goals.

This transition in occupational safety measurement is well underway. Substantial research supports these approaches, and businesses across the United States are already integrating leading indicators into their safety and health practices.⁴ Each year NSC awards organizations for their commitment to adopting SIF practices and building a culture of safety at their workplace. General Mills, a Minneapolis-based company, won the 2024 NSC Innovation Award for transitioning to pSIF metrics as its primary key performance indicator (KPI) for workplace safety in its Global Responsibility Report.⁵ More recently, Southern California Edison was awarded the 2025 NSC Networks Catalyst in Safety Award in recognition of their proactive approach to innovating workplace safety and mitigating hazards, as seen in their report *Energy-Based Safety: A Transformational Approach to Eliminating Serious Injuries and Fatalities (SIF)*.⁶

Utilizing leading indicators is not limited to large businesses. A study published in 2014 by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found that a majority of small businesses were engaging in safety practices.⁷ 82% of small businesses were engaging in periodic safety inspections and 66% stated that safety training or safety awareness was a part of a new employee's job orientation.⁸ Shifting to a leading indicators mindset isn't about adding burdensome requirements to businesses. Instead, a focus on leading indicators ensures that the safety activities businesses adopt build a positive safety culture on jobsites across the country.

To make vital progress in eliminating workplace injuries and fatalities, employers should place a crucial focus on identifying hazards on jobsites that can result in life-altering injuries or death. Once hazards are identified, controls should be implemented to either engineer the hazards out of the work or establish a safe and effective method for performing the work while controlling the hazard to the greatest extent possible. For the highest-risk industries, including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, this shift can result in substantial improvements in safety outcomes.

NSC Advocates for Employer Implementation of SIF Prevention

NSC has highlighted the importance of leading indicators for more than a decade

⁴ <https://www.thecampbellinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Campbell-Institute-Transforming-EHS-through-Leading-Indicators-WP.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.nsc.org/nsc-membership/individual-achievement-awards/orc-innovation-awards/2024-innovation-award>

⁶ https://www.nsc.org/newsroom/nsc-presents-the-networks-catalyst-in-safety-award?_gl=1*1tgkacf*_up*MQ..*_gs*MQ..&gclid=EAlaIqobChMI3JbGrvGnlAMVbE5HAR1BowvDEAAYASAAEgJICvD_BwE&gbraid=0AAAAADdXQvk261-Xr1mDWjRiFsjSrrlkn

⁷ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4556595/>

⁸ Ibid.

through our Campbell Institute and Networks initiatives.⁹ NSC supports employer efforts to implement SIF prevention practices across the full lifecycle of safety management, from planning and implementation to benchmarking and assessment.

In 2025, the National Safety Council launched the NSC SIF Prevention Model and guidebook, available at no cost to employers.¹⁰ The four-step Model “leverages the Plan, Do, Check, Act framework to assess risk and prevent future incidents.” Together, the Model and corresponding guidebook offer discrete, actionable steps to help organizations focus on proactive prevention rather than reactive response.

Additionally, the National Safety Council and our members led the recent effort to significantly expand and strengthen the ASTM International E2920-26 standard on SIF prevention.¹¹ Published in January of this year, this updated international consensus standard offers a roadmap for how organizations can measure safety performance with a SIF-prevention focus. NSC encourages businesses of all sizes and industries to implement the SIF-prevention practices outlined in the ASTM International standard to better protect their workers.

NSC views the recently updated ASTM International E2920-26 standard as a critical baseline and necessary first step for organizations seeking to strengthen their safety performance. The standard establishes consistent minimum expectations for identifying and managing high-risk work. However, alone it is not sufficient to achieve sustained SIF reduction. Meaningful progress requires employers to move beyond baseline compliance toward more mature safety systems that integrate leading indicators, frontline engagement, learning processes, and continuous improvement.

Advocating for a National Emphasis Program on SIF Prevention

Given the persistent fatality rates in high-hazard industries, such as construction and transportation and warehousing,¹² NSC advocates for OSHA to establish a National Emphasis Program (NEP) on Serious Injury and Fatality (SIF) prevention in specific industries. An NEP would accelerate the shift from reactive compliance to proactive risk management by explicitly encouraging employers to advance in their safety maturity.

An NEP focused on SIF prevention would also signal that preventing serious injuries and fatalities requires a higher level of organizational maturity than traditional lagging indicator compliance. A NEP would encourage employers to adopt advanced SIF

⁹ The [Campbell Institute](#) at the National Safety Council is the Center of Environmental, Health and Safety Excellence. The Institute is built on the premise that protecting people is integral to business excellence, and fundamental to operational and financial performance. The Campbell Institute helps organizations of all sizes and sectors achieve and sustain EHS excellence. [NSC Networks](#) is a global occupational safety and health consulting and networking group that provides unique forums for interaction among NSC member companies.

¹⁰ <https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/abdc94f2-651b-4843-919c-81e1629755fe/sif-guidebook.pdf>

¹¹ https://www.nsc.org/newsroom/nsc-statement-on-sif-prevention-astm-standard?srsId=AfmBOoplS-TtdowFfb3VjPDeOLonaSHzwC4SpHDC-W_fi0kvjmsiMyS

¹² <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/industry-incidence-rates/most-dangerous-industries/>

prevention practices, as outlined in the NSC SIF Prevention Model, while using ASTM E2920-26 as a framework to build more robust and unique prevention strategies necessary for their business. This would be the beginning of a watershed movement to improve workplace safety across the country to help ensure workers return home safe at the end of the day.

II. LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO AUGMENT WORKPLACE SAFETY

Technology is becoming more critical to how employers facilitate safe workplace environments for their employees. One type of technology that is burgeoning in workplaces around the country – and one that this committee has been actively exploring – is artificial intelligence (AI). Through numerous white papers and case studies, NSC has sought to understand how workplaces are leveraging technology solutions to address key safety use cases for employers.^{13,14}

As this committee has learned in recent hearings, AI offers an opportunity for organizations to leverage large volumes of data to drive predictive and prescriptive insights, rather than relying on lagging indicators after employees have already been harmed. Recent advances in natural language processing, image and video processing, big data, and predictive and prescriptive analytics can provide organizations with new insights and tools to solve problems – enabling wide visibility across industrial facilities, concise views of thousands of written reports and the ability to make faster decisions.

Addressing the Employer Readiness Gap

A recent report released by the National Safety Council and Wolters Kluwer Enablon found that, despite a strong interest among safety professionals in using AI, concerns remain high. 90% of those surveyed reported concern about the implications of AI use, with 65% citing overreliance as a key risk.¹⁵ Many workplaces are still in the process of digitizing their environmental, health, and safety (EHS) systems with only 11% of respondents saying they use fully digital EHS systems.¹⁶

Education, communication, and workforce readiness will be key to leveraging the potential benefits of AI to augment workplace safety initiatives.

NSC Supports Safety Professionals Harnessing AI

¹³ <https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/f0a9e191-eeb0-41cb-9d88-43f2dfee1d28/msd-emerging-tech-report.pdf?srsId=AfmBOoqyHHSfnjgrCspPd3-2D89MkYp3k-ffMEV1EsNvNhPfBhQrTsmO>

¹⁴ <https://www.nsc.org/workplace/safety-topics/work-to-zero/resources?srsId=AfmBOoNf1d-uXqxAkdfCLz5rhf-cdjZHi1nr-5midiU707VdnXIYrHZ>

¹⁵ https://www.nsc.org/newsroom/report-ehs-ai-adoption-rapid-needs-guardrails?srsId=AfmBOoOzAHF_WOjpDagE6COXCm_PxqprnhiOJYHsK99H4YfEERkz7ki

¹⁶ Ibid.

The National Safety Council partners with firms like CompScience to use AI-powered safety analytics to improve safety on the job. Last month, CompScience launched its new Safe Work Plan platform that analyzes user inputs – including photos taken on a cell phone – to detect potential safety hazards, such as improper machine guarding or potential falls from height.¹⁷ The platform integrates the NSC SIF Prevention Model into its AI algorithm to empower safety professionals with real-time intelligence about safeguards and high hazard work.

Furthermore, the National Safety Council Work to Zero initiative, in partnership with the McElhattan Foundation, identifies promising technology innovations geared toward eliminating workplace fatalities within our lifetime. Work to Zero is exploring using a variety of technologies, including AI, to identify hazardous situations, such as human-machine collisions or improper handling of dangerous materials. The National Safety Council provides resources to support businesses, including small businesses, in adoption of new technologies.^{18,19}

Examples of Industry Applications of AI

In 2023, Service Center Metals piloted computer vision technology within its shipping and receiving docks to detect damaged, missing, or under-inflated safety airbags that help break potential falls during the loading and unloading process.²⁰ Since workers climb on and off trucks up to 14 times per hour on average, these airbags are crucial to preventing workplace falls and injuries. Even though workers undergo regular safety training, more training is needed to monitor the airbags and ensure everyone's safety. In the two months following deployment of the technology into the loading bays, Service Center Metals reported zero near misses and injuries requiring first aid as well as a substantial increase in daily airbag compliance rates from 25% to more than 90%, and a 400% increase in unsafe observations by workers because of the renewed focus on safety through the pilot program, allowing the team to dedicate more time to other safety challenges.

Another AI use case is for employee training. In 2022, Georgia-Pacific received special recognition in the National Safety Council's Networks Innovation Awards for their virtual reality (VR) training program. Georgia-Pacific employees use headsets and controllers to experience immersive, computer-generated simulations of real-world work environments, enabling safer training and improved hazard recognition without real-world exposure.²¹

¹⁷ <https://www.nsc.org/newsroom/ai-safety-platform-based-on-nsc-model-launches>

¹⁸ <https://www.nsc.org/faforms/work-to-zero-small-business-guide-to-safety-tech>

¹⁹ <https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/aa7620b7-9f77-432b-8ef3-22112c530af4/technology-implementation.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.nsc.org/safety-first/nsc-work-to-zero-initiative-and-safetytech-acceler?srsId=AfmBOopSFq5pvGnlOA6lDqIBCAhAc8HHWt-ejXAGaSdNHNT1gBfaZBj8>

²¹ <https://www.nsc.org/nsc-membership/individual-achievement-awards/orc-innovation-awards/2022-innovation-award>

NSC recognizes that AI and other technologies will continue to play a substantial role in how employers manage their safety efforts. We look forward to partnering with this committee as well as with OSHA and NIOSH to showcase the latest research, case studies and examples of how workplaces are leveraging technology to keep their workers safe.

III. UPDATING HAZARDOUS ENERGY CONTROL STANDARD

As technology matures, it is imperative to recognize regulations that are no longer relevant to the day-to-day operations of businesses. One such example where technology has matured rapidly enough to outpace its relative OSHA standard is Lockout/Tagout technology for hazardous energy control.

Published in 1989, this standard has never been updated, despite advances over the decades in electronic and computer-based Lockout/Tagout systems that current rules prohibit. The OSHA standard specifically requires that “locks, tags, chains, wedges, key blocks, adapter pins, self-locking fasteners, or other hardware shall be provided by the employer for isolating, securing or blocking of machines or equipment from energy sources.”²² The standard also requires that these devices be “durable, substantial and identifiable.”²³ While the original standard may have been appropriate for its time, today there are computer-based systems that provide similar, if not greater, levels of protection to employees working with systems capable of releasing hazardous energy.

NSC supports modernizing the standard so employers can use proven and effective new tools while maintaining worker protections. The Council stands ready to work with OSHA to advance this effort. To engage effectively, NSC believes all stakeholder voices should direct input in how this standard can be modernized to leverage accessible technology and ensure workforce protections. Convening employers, labor organizations, workers, technology companies, and safety organizations will ensure any effort to modernize this standard will have the full breadth of input available. NSC remains a committed partner to OSHA in ensuring regulations stay relevant and improve safety outcomes for American workers.

New NSC Effort to Advance Digitization of Hazardous Energy Control Systems

As part of our efforts to facilitate modernizing workplace safety efforts with technology, the National Safety Council 2026 Safety Innovation Challenge will focus on modernizing hazardous energy control processes. This challenge will highlight innovative technologies that can identify, secure, and communicate hazardous energy risks in the workplace to drive down rates of injuries and fatalities. Submissions, due June 10, will be evaluated based on impact, evidence of effectiveness, ability to commercialize, innovation, quality, and readiness for pilot-scale evaluation by early 2027.

²² <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.147>

²³ Ibid.

IV. SUPPORTING WORKER WELLBEING AS WORKPLACE SAFETY

NIOSH research shows work-related psychosocial hazards, such as high stress, lack of decision-making power, unrealistic production timelines, and long hours, are increasingly contributing to occupational injuries, illness and disability, making worker mental health a core workplace safety issue.²⁴ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data shows the construction and mining industries face some of the nation's highest rates of suicide.²⁵ Although construction represents about 7.5% of the workforce, it accounts for 17.9% of suicides, according to the Center for Construction Research and Training.²⁶

NSC Advocates for Employers, NIOSH to Promote Worker Wellbeing

NSC believes employers should proactively identify and reduce workplace stressors, integrate mental health into safety management systems, train leaders, and provide accessible supports and benefits so that prevention, early intervention, and recovery are built into everyday work. The National Safety Council Workplace Wellbeing Hub provides employer resources on supporting worker mental health through prevention, early identification and response.²⁷ Examples include a quick guide on training employees on mental health risks, a five-minute toolbox talk on destigmatizing mental health in the workplace and a Crisis Response Guide for Safety Professionals.

NSC is actively working on legislation that would allow NIOSH to engage in cooperative agreements with nonprofits, research institutions, and state health departments to create workplace-focused trainings on suicide prevention, mental health distress and impairment as well as facilitate workplace-based recovery programs.

V. PREVENTING OPIOID OVERDOSE

Drug overdose is the leading cause of death for young adults aged 18-44, according to the CDC, with more than 80,000 overdose deaths nationwide in 2024.²⁸ Drug overdose also represents 8% of workplace fatalities today, with opioid use as either primary or secondary source of injury.²⁹ Furthermore, in 2024, Emergency Medical Services were activated more than 12,600 times to respond to potential opioid overdoses in workplace settings.³⁰ These figures demonstrate that opioid overdose is not only a public health crisis, but a workplace safety issue as well.

²⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/bulletin/2024/workplace-psychosocial-hazards.html>

²⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7250a2.htm>

²⁶ https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/KF2024-Suicide_Among_Construction_Workers.pdf

²⁷ <https://www.nsc.org/workplace/workplace-wellbeing-hub?srsId=AfmBOorw55rsDLFiHLUEeu6u8ye6QgDxJwPFydYWuAWE1r-NP4o1wm5E>

²⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2025/2025-cdc-reports-decline-in-us-drug-overdose-deaths.html>

²⁹ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/safety-topics/overdose-deaths/>

³⁰ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/safety-topics/overdose-deaths/data-details/>

Opioid use disorder is a chronic medical condition, not a moral failing. Prevention, compassion, and preparedness, especially in workplaces and communities, are essential to reducing overdose deaths. NSC believes addressing opioid overdose requires widespread availability of naloxone, a lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medication; training to recognize and respond to overdoses; supportive workplace and community policies; and sustained investment in treatment, recovery, and anti-stigma efforts.

NSC Advocates for Expanded Access to Naloxone

According to the 2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), nearly two-thirds of adults with substance use disorders (SUD) are in the workforce.³¹ NSC is a leading advocate of making naloxone an essential component of workplace emergency preparedness. NSC has advocated in ANSI standards committees for every workplace to have naloxone in its first aid kit, alongside fire extinguishers and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). In close collaboration with the International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA), NSC is leading efforts to ensure the next update to the ANSI/ISEA Z308.1-2021 standard for workplace first aid kits includes naloxone.

NSC is the leading nonprofit voice supporting the bipartisan Workplace Overdose Reversal Kits (WORK) to Save Lives Act, introduced in the House by Representatives by Reps. Bonnie Watson Coleman and John Rutherford and in the Senate by Senators Jeff Merkley and Lisa Murkowski. This legislation would require public buildings to have naloxone onsite as well as have OSHA create non-mandatory guidance for employers should they choose to stock naloxone on their jobsites. NSC leads by example by having naloxone present at all our physical locations in the United States.

NSC Promotes Recovery Supportive Workplaces

The National Safety Council promotes recovery supportive workplaces by encouraging employers to adopt policies and practices that support workers in or seeking recovery from SUDs. Research demonstrates workers in recovery show productivity levels comparable to or better than their peers.³² Employers can promote substance use recovery by reducing stigma, offering work-life wellbeing programming and supervisor impairment training, providing information and access to care for a SUD when required, and offering fair-chance policies and employment accommodations when feasible.

To support employers in taking action, NSC offers a range of free, evidence-based resources to help workplaces prevent and respond to opioid overdoses. These resources include guidance on developing workplace overdose response plans, training materials on recognizing and responding to overdoses, tools to support naloxone

³¹ <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt56287/2024-nsduh-annual-national-report.pdf>

³² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11327187/>

access and use, and education to reduce stigma and encourage users to seek help.^{33,34,35} These resources are designed to be practical, easy to implement, and accessible to employers of all sizes and industries.

VI. ADDRESSING CANNABIS IMPAIRMENT

Impairment from cannabis use can reduce fitness for duty and significantly increase the risk of injuries, errors and fatalities on the job. It is imperative that individuals impaired by cannabis not be in safety-sensitive positions so they do not put their safety and the safety of everyone else at risk. Cannabis impairment presents a significant challenge for businesses across the country, driven by evolving legalization and use patterns and the difficulty of reliably assessing impairment.

Recent Rescheduling of Cannabis

On April 23, 2026, the Department of Justice announced that FDA-approved cannabis products and products containing cannabis subject to a Qualifying State-issued License are immediately moving from Schedule I to Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA).

While NSC maintains no position on legalization efforts, we do support the rescheduling of cannabis to Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act. Rescheduling will allow additional federal research efforts to improve research on the safety implications of cannabis in the workplace and impairment assessment.

NSC Chapters work with local employers and law enforcement to produce green labs, which offer opportunities for employers to see cannabis impairment in a controlled environment and train future Drug-recognition Expert officers (DREs) in roadside testing for cannabis impairment. The National Safety Council Alcohol, Drugs and Impairment Division, a volunteer advisory body of leading experts, has been actively involved in developing consensus standards related to toxicological investigations in drug-impaired driving cases. Federal research will help support current efforts in place related to understanding and mitigating impairment from cannabis within the workplace and on our roadways.

VII. MANAGING DRIVING RISKS AS AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD

For millions of people, our nation's roadways serve as their workplace. At the same time, roadways account for the highest share of work-related fatalities — and have for

³³ <https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/9f1e4d9d-ac41-4513-90f4-80a446efbd5f/worker-wellbeing-hub-implementation-guide.pdf?srsId=AfmBO0oaC1sn8fNr-1QoXQKpZw1OhDJHP40ddTkSgNAbPLgE4Av06KGE>

³⁴ <https://www.nsc.org/shop/all-products/naloxone-for-suspected-opioid-overdose-elearn-1>

³⁵ <https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/d18be96c-f808-4fac-a5f2-6cfb1d2a80a5/stigma.pdf.aspx?srsId=AfmBOoqymSc6ZhSSK1zoSYRH0ZroPh8jood1HneURfr4ye5olQXfV9K>

the past 45 years.³⁶ In 2024, 38% of all workplace fatalities were transportation related, underscoring the outsized risk faced by workers whose jobs put them on or near roadways. Just recently, two highway workers were killed in Maryland in motor-vehicle incidents.³⁷ These fatalities are not accidents; they are policy failings. Whether someone is performing a roadside tow or helping to fix America's roadway infrastructure, they deserve to be safe on the job and return home at the end of their shift.

NSC Advocates for Greater USDOT-USDOL Collaboration

To disrupt this tragic trend, NSC advocates for a new approach that involves greater participation of workplace safety stakeholders and substantive partnership between the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to manage driving risks as any other occupational hazard. USDOT and USDOL can leverage their convening authorities to facilitate important dialogue surrounding the unique safety challenges roadside workers face. Furthermore, USDOT and USDOL can jointly articulate best practices for both roadside workers and motorists to ensure safety is top of mind when navigating America's roadways.

Other examples of collaboration include joint press and safety campaign engagements for OSHA and relevant USDOT modal administrations during Work Zone Awareness Week and OSHA support of move-over laws for first responders.

NSC Advocates for Adopting Safe-Driving Technologies

Employers with fleets should put a greater emphasis on driver training and adopting technologies that will keep their drivers and the traveling public safe. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Crash Reporting Sampling System (CRSS) and Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data, crashes involving large trucks have increased significantly over the past decade, with fatalities rising by 30%.³⁸ In 2024, large trucks were involved in 5,218 fatal crashes, with another 120,724 involved in crashes resulting in serious injuries.³⁹ To the extent possible, employers should ensure that their fleet vehicles are equipped with lifesaving Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as seat belt reminders, adaptive cruise control, automatic emergency braking (AEB), lane-keeping assistance, blind spot monitoring, and Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA).

Other technologies, such as telematics, offer near real-time insights into how drivers are performing and enable employers to move beyond anecdotal oversight toward data-driven safety management. In examining the benefits of integrating telematics into

³⁶ <https://www.osha.gov/motor-vehicle-safety>

³⁷ <https://www.thebanner.com/community/transportation/highway-worker-killed-somerset-county-eastern-shore-K32K5HAQZVBVHBTFMILIYLODZE/>

³⁸ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/road-users/large-trucks/>

³⁹ Ibid.

corporate fleet operations, NSC has found that when telematics are embedded into formal fleet safety policies, rather than treated as standalone technology, businesses see stronger safety outcomes and organizational change. These results are further strengthened when businesses clearly define roles and responsibilities for managers and drivers, and establish appropriate coaching, incentive and disciplinary processes, where appropriate.

Harsh braking and speeding are behaviors that can be identified and corrected through real-time feedback, positive coaching and retraining to ensure risk is contained. For example, PepsiCo fleet operations deployed telematics and driver safety scorecards paired with coaching and integrated safe-driving expectations into the company's broader safety culture. Outcomes included measurable improvements in driver behavior, which reduced crash risk across fleet operations. The company's Safe Drive Index increased from 30% in 2018 to 97% in 2020, and their Vehicle Collision Frequency Rate by Distance decreased from 7.4 crashes per 1 million kilometers in 2018 to 5.8 crashes per 1 million kilometers in 2020.⁴⁰ Employers should incorporate safe-driving policies and practices into their safety, health and management systems, and ensure employer actions, such as phone calls or delivery timelines, are not inadvertently contributing to employees engaging in dangerous behaviors behind the wheel.

Through strong leadership commitment, active employee involvement, clear safe-driving policies, training and accountability, use of data and vehicle safety technology, and integration of driving risk management into overall safety culture and systems, employers can save lives by treating driving as a workplace safety responsibility, rather than a personal risk.

VIII. WORKPLACE SAFETY REQUIRES EFFECTIVE FEDERAL PARTNERS

Efficient workplace safety agencies are imperative to achieve our workplace safety goals. NSC strongly supports efforts to ensure OSHA and NIOSH are resourced and budgeted appropriately while ensuring taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently and effectively.

OSHA and NIOSH Are Foundational to Workplace Safety

Our nation's workers underpin the success of businesses throughout the country, and the federal agencies that support their safety are essential to our economic and public health. OSHA and NIOSH are foundational to helping businesses maintain safe workplaces with quality data, compliance assistance, research and program activities.

OSHA

⁴⁰ <https://togetherforsaferoads.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/341/TSR-Telematics-Report-Final-2025.pdf>

OSHA ensures compliance with the law on critical safety issues while also focusing a large share of its efforts on voluntary cooperation between private businesses, labor organizations, and safety partners to ensure millions of American workers return home safe and sound after their shift. OSHA's regulatory authority and powers must be preserved, with its efforts striking the right balance between supporting compliance assistance, catalyzing innovation and competitiveness while also carrying out enforcement against egregious offenders and bad actors. The agency's collaborative tools must be harnessed and continue to help companies reap the dividends of safety, serving the many small and mid-sized businesses that rely on them, especially the businesses without major budgets who need assistance establishing safety programs. OSHA reports that businesses relying on the agency and its collaborative tools experience injury and illness rates below industry averages, a strong economic incentive for safety.⁴¹

OSHA helps ensure a fair and level playing field by establishing a baseline that prevents businesses from racing to the bottom by undercutting competitors through reduced investment in safety. OSHA also protects workers from unlawful retaliation, enforces whistleblower laws, advances training, outreach, education and assistance, maintains vital relationships with organized and non-organized labor, and ensures state oversight efforts are as effective as federal efforts. OSHA's local offices and staff are vital to these efforts.

NIOSH

Many of the workplace safety innovations being discussed at this hearing are based on NIOSH research and evaluation, which are crucial to eliminating workplace fatalities and serious injuries. NIOSH's evidence-based research is not duplicated elsewhere in the federal government and is relied on throughout the public and private sectors, including at NSC, to inform policy, industry practices and worker protections. As a science-based federal organization, NIOSH gathers injury and illness data, identifies and assesses workplace risks, conducts scientific research in both laboratory and field settings, and translates the knowledge gained into practical products, services and recommendations. NIOSH's research spans traditional hazards like chemical exposure and noise to emerging risks from artificial intelligence, robotics and an evolving workforce. As industries rapidly adopt new technologies, NIOSH's expertise helps ensure that innovation does not come at the cost of worker safety. Moreover, NIOSH is at the forefront of addressing complex, systemic challenges such as the aging workforce, mental health and the integration of worker wellbeing into occupational safety frameworks.

41

<https://www.osha.gov/vpp/evaluation2021#:~:text=During%20calendar%20year%202021%2C%20VPP,representing%20more%20than%2021%2C000%20employees.>

NIOSH provides the scientific evidence base for OSHA regulations by developing hazard criteria, evaluating exposure limits, and assessing the effectiveness of prevention strategies. While OSHA is responsible for enforcing workplace safety standards, it relies heavily on NIOSH's rigorous, peer-reviewed research to inform rulemaking. This partnership ensures regulations are grounded in the best available science, enhancing their effectiveness and credibility across industries.

CONCLUSION

Preventing serious injuries and fatalities is within our reach if we modernize how we think about workplace safety, measure risk proactively, and fully leverage innovation, partnerships, industry best practices, and prevention-focused approaches. We know what works and we know where action is needed: expanding the use of leading indicators and AI-driven insights; modernizing outdated standards like Lockout/Tagout; addressing mental health, substance use and impairment; managing driving risks; and ensuring strong federal safety partners.

This is a pivotal moment. Technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace, and there is growing bipartisan recognition that worker safety and wellbeing are foundational to economic strength and workforce participation. If we seize this moment by aligning policy with prevention, modernizing regulations, supporting research and empowering employers and workers, we can save lives at scale.

The cost of inaction is measured not only in dollars, but in families forever changed and communities diminished. Together, we can ensure safety keeps pace with innovation and that every worker, in every industry, has the protections they deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.