

Every year, Workers Memorial Day is observed on April 28. This day serves as a remembrance for workers who have lost their lives or been injured on the job. As we remember those who have died in preventable workplace tragedies, suffered diseases due to exposure to toxic substances or been injured because of dangerous conditions, it is also an opportunity to reflect on the need to renew our commitment to improving health and safety in the workplace.

The day has special significance to those who are dedicated to addressing occupational health and safety issues. Every day**,** 13 workers are killed on the job in the United States. Despite the difficulties and challenges we face in achieving the goal of reducing and eliminating workplace hazards, we must remain ever vigilant.

Since the establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, over 40 years ago, the number of worker deaths per year has been reduced from approximately 14,000 in 1970 to 4,836 in 2015. This is a substantial achievement given the fact that over the same time period, the workforce has doubled in size. However, too many workers still remain at risk.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, fatal work injuries in construction increased to 937 in 2015 from 899 in 2014. This increase in construction fatalities represents the highest total since 2008 (975). Hispanic or Latino workers incurred 903 fatal injuries in 2015—the highest number since 2007. Fatal injuries involving Hispanic or Latino workers rose 12 percent in just one year, with an increase in the rate from 3.7 in 2014 to 4.0 per 100,000 full time employees (FTE) in 2015. This is quite significant, as it was the highest rate among all racial/ethnic groups for which rates are calculated. Overall, fatal injuries involving foreign-born workers, who came from over 100 different countries, were at the highest level since 2007. Fatalities among contracted workers rose to 829 in 2015 from 802 in 2014 and accounted for 17 percent of all fatalities in 2015.These statistics underscore the importance of providing safety and health training in the appropriate language and upon hiring since many temporary workers are killed or injured in their first week at work.

As an employer or an organization with which we have had contact over the past year, we invite you to join us in commemorating this day. Nationally, this day is observed in many ways. The Hasbrouck Heights Area Office of OSHA invites you to participate in Workers Memorial Day this year by holding an event or ceremony at your worksite. Some of the events that have been sponsored in the past include: a moment of silence at the workplace, the distribution of black ribbon pins, a tree planting ceremony or simply distributing educational information such as the enclosed fact sheet to raise awareness about the importance of workplace safety and health.

Over the years, numerous communities have dedicated plaques, sites and monuments to workers who have lost their lives because of dangerous working conditions. There may already be events scheduled in your region that you can attend.

Please feel free to contact us for more information about Workers Memorial Day or if you have any questions. We would appreciate hearing from you on the results of your effort to raise awareness in your workplace regarding occupational health and safety on this Workers Memorial

Day, April 28, 2017 Please contact our designated Workers Memorial Day coordinator, Michael Silva in the Hasbrouck Heights Area Office at 201 - 288-1700. Thank you for working with us this year to emphasize the importance of prevention rather than after-the-fact enforcement.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh.pdf>