

# OSHA QuickTakes

Occupational Safety and Health Administration



A twice monthly newsletter with information about workplace safety and health.

## Top Stories

### **New final rule updates walking-working surfaces standards and establishes personal fall protection requirements**

OSHA issued a [final rule](#) Nov. 17 updating its 44-year old general industry [Walking-Working Surfaces](#) standard to protect workers from slip, trip, and fall hazards. The rule also increases consistency in safety and health standards for people working in both general and construction industries. OSHA estimates the final rule will prevent more than 5,800 injuries a year. The rule takes effect Jan. 17, 2017.

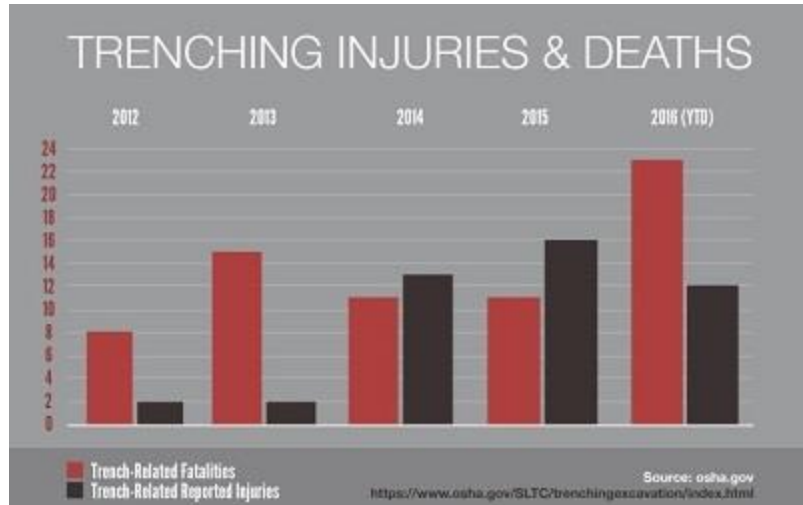


"The final rule will increase workplace protection from those hazards, especially fall hazards, which are a leading cause of worker deaths and injuries," said OSHA Assistant Secretary Dr. David Michaels. The rule's most significant update is allowing employers to select the fall protection system that works best for them, choosing from a range of accepted options. For more information, read the [news release](#).

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### **Ohio worker's death highlights doubling of trench collapse fatalities nationwide in 2016**

Twenty-three workers have been killed and 12 others injured in trench collapses so far in 2016 – an alarming increase from the previous year. "There is no excuse," said Dr. David Michaels, OSHA assistant secretary. "These fatalities are completely preventable by complying with OSHA standards that every construction contractor should know."



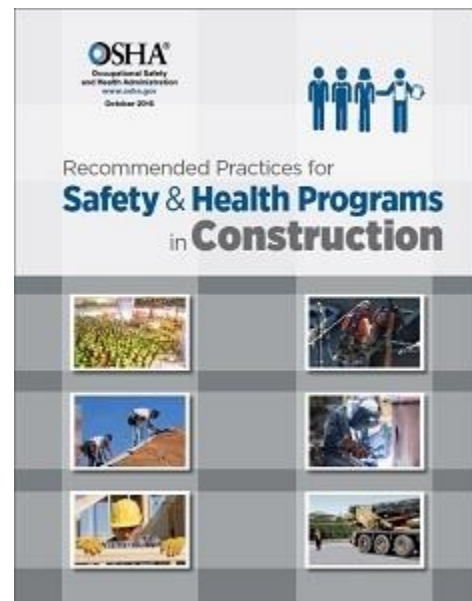
Among the victims was a 33-year-old employee, crushed to death this summer as he dug a 12-foot trench for KRW Plumbing LLC of Ohio. An OSHA investigation found that KRW failed to protect its workers from the dangers of trench collapses. The company was issued two willful and two serious violations, with proposed penalties of \$274,359.

OSHA's [trenching standards](#) require protective systems on trenches deeper than 5 feet, with soil and other materials kept at least two feet from the edge of trench. OSHA has a national emphasis program on trenching and excavations with the goal of increasing hazard awareness and employer compliance with safety standards. For more information, read the [news release](#).

## OSHA issues recommended practices to promote workplace safety and health programs in construction

As a complement to its recommended practices to help employers in general industry establish safety and health programs in their workplaces, OSHA has released [Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs in Construction](#). The recommendations may be particularly helpful to small- and medium-sized contractors who may not have safety and health specialists on staff. The goal of [safety and health programs](#) is to prevent work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths as well as the financial difficulties these events can cause for workers, their families and their employers. For more information, see the [news release](#).

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**Enforcement**

## New York tree service cited for failing to provide training that could have prevented worker's death



A tree service worker died on his first day on the job after he was pulled into a wood chipper. OSHA cited Countryside Tree Service in Albany, N.Y., for: exposing workers to amputation hazards while using chain saws; failing to train workers on the safe operation of wood chippers; and failing to ensure that workers wear personal protective equipment. Proposed penalties total \$141,811. For more information, read the [news release](#).

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## Ohio auto glass plant racks up \$227K in penalties following eight complaint inspections this year



Workers for Fuyao America Glass Inc. filed numerous complaints to OSHA of unsafe working conditions at the automotive glass supplier's Moraine, Ohio, plant. OSHA has inspected the facility eight times since its opening in October 2015. The most recent inspection found workers exposed to machines without adequate machine guarding, electrical safety violations and unmarked exits. The company was cited for 11 serious violations and issued proposed penalties of \$131,836. Fuyao is contesting some of the 24 safety violations issued this year to its Moraine facility, and a portion of the \$226,937 in total proposed penalties. Read the [news release](#) for more information.

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## Roofing company fined more than \$300K for exposing workers to falls at Pittsburgh worksite



OSHA recently cited A&W Roofing of Middlefield, Ohio, after an inspection of a Pittsburgh worksite found the company had failed to provide fall protection to employees working 35 to 40 feet above the ground on a steeply sloped roof. OSHA also found that the employer failed to ensure that workers on the ground wore hardhats as required to prevent head injuries, and failed to ensure that ladders were properly extended to prevent falls that could injure workers. In addition, A&W did not have an effective safety and health program in place and did not provide workers with fall protection training. A&W Roofing was cited in [2014](#), [2015](#) and [2016](#) for similar violations at worksites in Ohio. For more information, read the [news release](#).

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## Nebraska feed company fined more than \$500K following worker's fatal engulfment in grain bin



A 52-year-old maintenance employee in West Point, Neb., was buried in hundreds of pounds of grain after a wall of corn collapsed inside a grain storage bin. He was rescued by emergency crews but died of his injuries two days later. Investigators found multiple violations of OSHA standards for [grain handling](#) at Prinz Grain & Feed's facility including failure to issue [confined space](#) permits for grain bin entry, test [atmospheric conditions](#) in grain bins and pits, and provide training to employees on confined space entry. OSHA cited the animal

feed facility for three willful, 15 serious and two other-than-serious violations. The agency has placed Prinz in its [Severe Violator Enforcement Program](#), which focuses on employers that repeatedly endanger workers. OSHA has proposed penalties of \$526,633.

In 2015, the industry reported 22 grain-entrapment cases nationwide. The majority occurred on farms exempt from OSHA compliance. For more information, see the [news release](#).

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### State Plan enforcement cases

The following are recent examples of enforcement cases from [state occupational safety and health programs](#). For more examples of state and federal enforcement cases, visit OSHA's online [enforcement penalties map](#).

[California OSHA](#) issued \$130,125 in penalties to Elite Electric Inc. in Riverside for workplace safety violations following a June 13 incident where a worker suffered multiple injuries in a 29-foot fall. Cal/OSHA inspectors determined that the company failed to provide adequate fall protection for a rooftop access hatch and the edges of a roof. The company also did not provide the injured worker any fall prevention personal protective equipment. For more information, read the [news release](#).

The [Washington Division of Occupational Safety and Health](#) issued \$145,200 in fines to Dollar Tree Stores Inc. in Aberdeen after finding serious and repeat safety and health hazards. Inspectors determined that the company exposed workers to potential serious injuries by failing to ensure exit routes were free from obstructions or secure cluttered stacks of boxes, bundles and containers. Inspectors also discovered hazardous products stored in the work area, including helium cylinders that are explosive when heated, lighters and plastic merchandise that could emit toxic fumes in a fire, and unguarded light fixtures. For more information, read the [news release](#).

Please visit the [enforcement news releases page](#) for more on OSHA enforcement activity.

Enforcement cases with Initial Penalties Above \$40,000



**Whistleblower Protection**

## Colorado sporting goods manufacturer ordered to pay \$125K to employee fired for reporting unsafe equipment

An OSHA investigation found that Head Rush Technologies in Boulder, Colo., illegally fired an employee after the worker suggested to the company's chief executive officer that more safety research be conducted on its zip-line equipment. OSHA found that the company retaliated against the employee in violation of the [Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act](#). The agency ordered Head Rush to pay the former employee more than \$125,000 in back wages and damages, and take other corrective actions. For more information, read the [news release](#).



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CONSUMER PRODUCT  
SAFETY COMMISSION

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## OSHA Standards

### OSHA extends deadline for comments on proposed rule to improve provisions in its standards

OSHA is extending the comment period for its proposal to [revise provisions](#) that may be confusing, outdated or unnecessary in the agency's recordkeeping, general industry, maritime and construction standards. Originally scheduled to expire Dec. 5, the comment period will be extended to Jan. 4, 2017, to allow parties more time to review the rule and collect necessary information and data for comments. Individuals may submit comments electronically at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Comments also may be submitted by facsimile or mail.



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## Advisory Committees

### Meetings of National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health scheduled for Dec. 13-14

OSHA will hold a meeting of the NACOSH Occupational Safety and Health Professionals Pipeline Work Group on Dec. 13 in Washington, D.C. The work group will continue discussions on promoting careers in occupational safety and health, and growing the next generations of OSH professionals. A meeting of the [National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health](#) will also be held in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 14. The agenda includes the committee's consideration of a draft report from its Emergency Response and Preparedness Subcommittee and a report from the NACOSH OSH Professionals Pipeline Work Group. For more information on the meeting and submitting comments, read the [news release](#).



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## Alliances and Partnerships

### OSHA renews alliance with National STEPS Network and NIOSH to protect workers in oil and gas extraction industry

OSHA renewed its [alliance](#) on Nov. 29 with the National Service, Transmission, Exploration & Production Safety Network and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The alliance will continue efforts to prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities among workers in oil and gas exploration and production. During the initial two-year agreement, the alliance participants enhanced a [NIOSH database](#) of fatalities in the oil and gas extraction industry, and used the database to help drive the alliance's activities. Participants also developed and distributed hazard alerts on [tank gauging](#) and [hot work](#) based on an analysis of fatalities identified in the database, and organized a nationwide safety event in which employers took time out to conduct site inspections, safety training and other activities.



During the five-year renewal agreement, participants will develop and distribute additional hazard alerts, continue to support standardized orientation training for new workers, and distribute OSHA resources and information generated by NIOSH research to employers and workers. For more information, see the [news release](#).

### National Safety Council accepting nominations for Green Cross Awards until Dec. 9

The nonprofit National Safety Council, an [OSHA Alliance participant](#), is accepting nominations for its [Green Cross Awards for Safety](#), which recognize people and organizations who have contributed to the advancement of safety. NSC will accept nominations through Dec. 9 in the following three categories: [Safety Excellence](#), [Safety Innovation](#), and [Safety Advocate](#).



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## On-site Consultation

## Oregon surgical center celebrates five years of safety excellence

The Bend Surgery Center in Bend, Ore., worked with OSHA's [On-site Consultation Program](#) to develop procedures to address hazards including strains, sprains and needle sticks. These procedures included bloodborne pathogen and ergonomic programs, which were integrated into the center's [safety and health program](#) to help address the leading causes of reportable injuries and illnesses among outpatient care centers. The center was accepted into OSHA's [Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program](#) and made major safety improvements over a five-year period. Prior to being accepted into the program, the center's rate of injuries resulting in Days Away/Restricted or Job Transfer was nearly four times the industry average; this year, its rate was zero. For more information, see the [success story](#).



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## Educational Resources

### New bilingual cards explain whistleblower rights protected under five federal statutes

OSHA has released new cards explaining employee whistleblower rights protected by the agency under five federal statutes covering [occupational safety and health](#), [commercial motor carriers](#), [railroads](#), [aviation](#), and [securities fraud](#). Each card explains the activities protected by a specific statute, and provides contact information for OSHA and the time limit for filing a retaliation complaint. The information on each card is printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other.



### New fact sheets provide information on changes to electric power standards

A new series of fact sheets outline changes made in 2014 to OSHA's general industry and construction standards covering work involving [electric power generation, transmission and distribution](#) lines and equipment. The revisions were made to better protect workers, while also making the two standards more consistent. The fact sheets highlight some of the [major changes in the standards](#), as well as requirements for [electrical protective equipment](#), [fall protection](#), and [minimum approach](#)



[distance, information transfer and training.](#)

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- [Top 10 OSHA Citations of 2016: A Starting Point for Workplace Safety](#) by Thomas Galassi, director of enforcement programs for OSHA
- [Getting a GRIIP on Worker and Public Safety](#) by Leni Uddyback-Fortson, regional director of public affairs for the U.S. Department of Labor in Philadelphia
- [Your Work Has Dignity: Labor Rights Week 2016](#) by Fernando Garavito, community center director at CASA de Maryland

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### Featured Tweet



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