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www.orosha.org
Oregon employers are required to report fatalities and injuries resulting from work-related motor vehicle accidents to Oregon OSHA beginning Jan. 1, 2007 under recently updated safety and health rules.

Motor vehicle accidents nationally represent one-quarter of the total for workplace deaths. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, motor vehicle deaths on the job rose 2 percent in the United States during 2005. Motor vehicle accidents have been the leading cause of fatal workplace injuries in Oregon four of the past five years, accounting for 26 percent of fatalities compensable in the workers’ compensation system between 2001 and 2005.

“We haven’t done everything we can to create truly safe workplaces in Oregon until we address the largest single source of on-the-job fatalities in the state and in the nation — motor vehicles,” said Michael Wood, administrator of Oregon OSHA. “And our starting point needs to be a recognition that such deaths are workplace deaths. We need to track them and to treat them with the same seriousness and careful analysis that we try to provide whenever an employee is killed on the job.”

As has been the case for many years, fatal heart attacks that occur at work also must be reported to Oregon OSHA. Not all fatal heart attacks reported to Oregon OSHA result in an investigation.

Workplace deaths (including heart attacks) must be reported to Oregon OSHA at (800) 922-2689 within eight hours of the employer being aware of the incident. Workplace accidents that send three or more employees to the hospital must also be reported within eight hours, while employers must report an incident that requires the overnight hospitalization of a worker within 24 hours.

Oregon OSHA updated reporting requirements in September 2006 following public hearings on proposed rule changes in August.

I am sometimes asked by business owners and managers, as well as others, what it takes to develop a truly effective safety and health program. The question usually assumes that there is a particular structure, a particular program, or a particular approach that can be endorsed as the “best” approach to workplace health and safety. But my answer is both a bit simpler and a good deal more challenging: “You.”

The successes of the past have not been primarily the result of safety professionals or consultants. Effective change in the workplace requires the commitment of both management and workers. And I remain convinced that, wherever it starts (and it sometimes can start with pressure from workers, unions, or government agencies like Oregon OSHA), a truly successful safety and health program can best be measured by the level of personal involvement and commitment on the part of top leadership.

Several recent events have suggested to me that we are doing a better job of reaching out to the leadership of many Oregon employers — and they suggest that there are a number of Oregon employers who “get it” and treat safety as an ongoing and fundamental organizational value. Last June, the second Oregon Health Care Ergonomics conference included a stakeholder meeting that included, among others, employer representatives — but not simply the safety or risk managers. The organizers of the conference also were able to reach decision makers within a number of organizations. There was a follow-up meeting early in 2007.

The recent “NexCon” conference was a successful effort to design a construction safety conference for company principals and superintendents. It addressed safety as a factor in design and bidding, as well as ongoing operation. And the regional Pulp & Paper Conference held every December included a “mill managers roundtable” this year, as a forum for top managers to get together to talk about safety and the challenges they face and share solutions.

There are good, worthwhile programs out there. It does make sense to pay attention to fundamentals such as job hazard analysis and respect for the hierarchy of controls. And there are techniques that generally work better than others. But I’ll still stick with my original answer — the most important ingredient of workplace health and safety is you!

— Michael Wood, CSP
Employers in Oregon and southwest Washington interested in creating and maintaining safer workplaces will get that opportunity at the 2007 Oregon Governor’s Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) conference scheduled March 12-15, 2007 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

“Safety and Health Leadership: Moving Forward” is the theme for the 2007 event. The conference marks the 30th Oregon Governor’s conference since the event’s inception in 1944. Leadership Consultant Robert Pater will open the conference as the keynote speaker.

Several innovative programs are scheduled for the 2007 GOSH conference:

Advanced construction safety
A program track designed to meet the needs of construction safety professionals is scheduled for each day of the conference. Among topics covered include managing crane safety programs on worksites, safety for the general public around construction sites, accident investigation, and legal or contractual insurance concerns.

Preventing equipment theft
Several law enforcement and crime prevention agencies are partnering to present a full-day workshop on Heavy Equipment Theft during the final day of GOSH, March 15. Sponsoring agencies include the Federal Bureau of Investigation/Law Enforcement Executive Development Association, Construction Industry Crime Prevention Program, and the National Equipment Registry. The summit is designed for equipment managers, construction project managers, local law enforcement, and the insurance industry.

Advancing the safety and health profession
Safety and health professionals working toward certification as a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) or Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) can benefit from advanced coursework offered in a special CSP/CIH preparation workshop track. Professionals with active CSP/CIH certifications can also fulfill continuing education requirements by attending workshops.

Registration fees for the conference are $275 for the full four-day event; you can attend any single day for $120 (first or final day) or pay $95 each day for Tuesday and Wednesday sessions.

The conference is presented in odd-numbered years as a partnership between the Department of Consumer and Business Services, Occupational Safety and Health Division (Oregon OSHA) and the American Society of Safety Engineers, Columbia-Willamette Chapter.

Register for the conference online: www.b-there.com/breg/GOSH2007 or contact the Conference Section (503) 378-3272, or toll-free at (888) 292-5247
Pay special attention to excavations during winter and early spring

Oregon OSHA is urging Oregon employers whose work involves excavations or trenches to pay extra attention to safe working conditions during the rainy season.

Wet Oregon weather can result in days, if not weeks, of heavy rain. Continuous exposure to rain and high winds causes soil that is otherwise stable to become heavily saturated with water, creating unsafe conditions.

A cave-in can trap you within seconds and kill you within minutes. Two cubic yards of soil weigh about 6,000 pounds. If you’re buried, you’ll suffocate in less than three minutes and if you do survive, the weight of the soil is likely to cause serious internal injuries. Cave-ins aren’t the only hazard in excavation work. Lack of oxygen, toxic fumes, explosive gases, and buried power lines may also be present.

Oregon OSHA has a Trenching Safety Emphasis enforcement program that permits an Oregon OSHA investigator to inspect work conditions at commercial excavation projects in the state. Oregon OSHA conducts more than 100 on-site inspections as part of this program each year.

Oregon OSHA enforces safety and health regulations at worksites. However, homeowners working on weekend home improvement projects should also follow the same safety precautions that construction projects do:

- Make sure you are aware of buried utility routes — call before you dig! Contact the Oregon Utility Notification Center in the Portland Metro area at (503) 246-6699 or statewide at (800) 332-2344.
- Do not work in a trench deeper than 5 feet without shoring to keep the walls of the trench stable.
- Know your soil: Different compositions of soils absorb water differently. If you are unsure about the stability of your soil, additional information about soil analysis is available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the Oregon State University Extension Service.

- Keep equipment back from the edge of a trench at least 2 feet to prevent a cave-in and to prevent the equipment from rolling into the trench.
- Keep the rock and soil you remove from the trench at least 2 feet back from the edge of the trench.
- Bigger isn’t always better. Excavations that are more than 20 feet long require protective systems designed by a professional engineer, and soil composition needs to be evaluated by a trained specialist.
- Keep water from accumulating in an open excavation. Cover the trench with plastic or remove the water with buckets or pumps.
- Have an escape route — ladders or a similar means of getting up to ground level must be provided within 25 feet of where work is being performed. Oregon OSHA recently introduced the new publication “Excavation,” which includes information on safe work practices and a safe practices checklist. The publication and additional information is available on the Oregon OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org – look on our A-Z Index page of subjects under “Excavation.”
About 125 people from the safety, health care, and construction communities met Nov. 8 and 9 in Portland at the Next Generation Construction Summit (NexCon) to work toward making Oregon’s construction industry injury-free.

The two-day summit was organized by a diverse group of sponsors to bring leaders in Oregon’s construction industry together with leaders in ergonomics, government, organized labor, and health care to map a future for the construction industry that supports business growth and improves the safety of Oregon construction projects.

Conference organizers designed the two-day meeting to be a hands-on work session to address industry-specific concerns and help showcase effective construction safety programs in the Pacific Northwest. Work sessions included moderated discussions with ideas and findings being compiled real-time into a networked-computer database.

The keynote speech was delivered by former Oregon governor John Kitzhaber, who in private life has returned to the medical profession as founder of the Archimedes Movement, a public-policy organization based in Portland designed to foster public discussion about the future of health care in the United States.

The summit was developed as a partnership among the American Society of Safety Engineers Columbia-Willamette Chapter, Oregon State University, the Greater Portland Construction Partnership, Intel Corporation, Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290, Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association, Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors’ National Association/SHEET Metal Workers’ International Association, the National Electrical Contractors Association/International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Oregon OSHA.

The summary report from NexCon is available on the Web at www.ccee.oregonstate.edu/nexcon
Stanley Tools joins Voluntary Protection Program

The Stanley Works in Milwaukie joined the Oregon OSHA Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) as a “VPP Merit Award” worksite in November.

The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) is a workplace safety and health management program that encourages employers to voluntarily meet rigorous workplace safety standards to protect workers and reduce injuries. Currently, 12 Oregon worksites participate in VPP.

The Stanley Works employs 160 people at its Milwaukie plant, which manufactures hydraulic tools under the Stanley brand for nationwide distribution — primarily for use by railroads. During the past three years, the facility has maintained a workplace injuries and illness average that is 73 percent below the statewide industry average for tool manufacturers. In 2005, one injury case with time lost from work was reported during more than 300,000 hours of production at Stanley Works.


A federal facility, the United States Postal Service Evergreen DCU in Hillsboro, participates in the national Voluntary Protection Program coordinated by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Information about VPP can be found under “Quick Links” in the Consultation area of the Oregon OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org.
Don’t look down

Fire departments sometimes have to go to great lengths (or heights) to ensure that workers can get to safety in an emergency.

In December, members of Oregon Health & Science University and the Portland Fire Bureau performed rescue drills on the new Portland Aerial Tram that connects the OHSU Marquam Hill and OHSU Waterfront campuses. Before being granted final certification for transporting members of the public, officials needed to demonstrate that a mid-air rescue of OHSU employees and the public aboard the tram could be performed if the tram ever became stranded while under way.

Here’s how it works: Inside the tram car, the door is opened — a few inches — and a rescue kit attached by cable to a fixed point in the car is thrown by a person inside the tram car from the open door. Members of the Portland Fire & Rescue Heavy Rescue Unit waiting on the ground several stories below the car retrieve the rescue kit and begin attaching safety lines to the motorized rappelling equipment in the kit. A member of the Heavy Rescue Unit (who apparently has no problem with being seven to eight stories in the air) ascends the cable to the tram. Once in the tramcar, the rescuer attaches a metal safety basket (similar to ones used for Coast Guard rescues) to the additional safety lines. The person being rescued climbs in the safety basket and the Portland Fire & Rescue specialist then helps lower the tram passenger to the ground.

Both Portland Aerial Tram officials and Portland Fire & Rescue hope you’ll never see pictures of a real rescue. Many trams in the U.S. and Europe have operated for decades without the need for a mid-air evacuation, and many of those systems lack some of the safety features built into the Portland Aerial Tram. For example, the tram is equipped with redundant mechanical and electrical drive systems that continue to operate in the event of power outages at either the Waterfront or Marquam Hill terminals. The entire system also is under constant computer monitoring for minor problems or anomalies, which makes this type of evacuation extremely unlikely.
Plan ahead to be safe

Oregon OSHA requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. Those requirements include having emergency plans in place to address fires, disasters, and weather emergencies that could occur during work.

Emergency planning may not prevent emergencies, but it can protect lives, equipment, and property over the long term. Oregon OSHA requires most employers to have emergency action plans. Companies that have more than 10 employees must have written plans. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees don’t have to put their plans in writing; however, they must ensure that their employees know what procedures to follow to protect themselves in an emergency.

Follow these tips to make sure your employees can stay safe during emergencies, including workplace incidents and winter weather events:

- Communicate before, during, and after an emergency. Include emergency preparedness information in newsletters, bulletin boards, all-staff e-mails, and other internal communication tools.
- Consider setting up a telephone-calling tree, a password-protected page on the company Web site, an alert message sent to home e-mail accounts, or an answer-only voice-mail recording to provide information to employees in an emergency.
- Provide workers with wallet cards detailing instructions, including phone numbers and Web sites, for getting company information during an emergency. Information about closures and delays can protect workers from being exposed to unnecessary traffic hazards.
- Establish a process for safely evacuating your facility, if appropriate, and coordinate a safe area where workers can be accounted for.
- Once snow has fallen or ice has formed, make sure that parking lots and walkways are cleared of those hazards. Make sure heavy snow accumulations are removed from roofs so they do not impact the structural safety of the building.
- Identify co-workers in your organization with special needs. Train people willing to help workers with special needs get to safety and be sure they are physically suited to their responsibility. This is particularly important if a worker needs to be lifted or carried.
- Plan how you will alert people who cannot hear an alarm or instructions during an emergency.
- Closely tie a business continuity plan to your emergency plan. The business continuity plan should address how your business can remain functioning.
- Define incident-management procedures and individual responsibilities in advance. Make sure those involved know what they are supposed to do, and train others who can serve as a backup.
- Review your emergency plans annually. When you hire new employees or when there are changes in how your company functions, update your plan and inform your people.

Oregon OSHA has developed a free 28-page guide to emergency planning in the workplace called “Expecting the Unexpected.” The guide introduces employers to incident-management systems for the workplace, and explains factors to consider when planning for an emergency. The guide also addresses how to plan for emergencies such as threats of violence.

The guide is available in print, as a free download in the Emergency Action Plans section of the Oregon OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org, or on CD-ROM. For copies of the printed brochure or CD-ROM, contact the Oregon OSHA Resource Center at (800) 922-2689.
Workers’ Memorial Scholarship deadline is March 1

The Department of Consumer and Business Services, Occupational Safety and Health Division (Oregon OSHA) is offering assistance to Oregon students through the Workers’ Memorial Scholarship for the 2007-2008 academic year.

The Workers’ Memorial Scholarship is open to any high school graduate, graduating high school senior, GED recipient, or current college undergraduate or graduate student. Eligible applicants must be Oregon residents receiving fatality benefits, a dependent or the spouse of a fatally injured worker, or the dependent or spouse of an Oregon worker who has incurred a permanent total disability while on the job and whose claim for workers’ compensation benefits was accepted. Scholarship funds are available for use at colleges within the United States.

The deadline for submitting an application for the 2007-2008 school year is March 1, 2007.

Application forms are included in the 2007-2008 Scholarship Application packet available from the Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) on its Web site, www.osac.state.or.us. Your local high school guidance counselor or Oregon college financial aid departments should also have forms available. Online applications are also accepted at the OSAC electronic application Web site, www.GetCollegeFunds.org.

Four students received Workers’ Memorial Scholarship awards in 2006 — Jillian Becker of Molalla, Molly Foster of Portland, Annette Smith of Eugene, and Caroline Suiter of Eugene.

The scholarship awards are provided by a Department of Consumer and Business Services fund that uses interest earned from Oregon OSHA civil penalties. The 1991 Legislature established the Workers’ Memorial Scholarship at the request of the Oregon AFL-CIO, with support from Associated Oregon Industries.

For more information concerning the Workers’ Memorial Scholarship program, contact Claudia Marthaller with Oregon OSHA, (503) 378-3272 or the Oregon Student Assistance Commission at (800) 452-8807.
Safety training and education grants available from DCBS

The Department of Consumer and Business Services, Occupational Safety and Health Division (Oregon OSHA) has grant funding available to assist in the development of workplace safety and health education programs in Oregon. The Oregon OSHA Training and Education Grants Program is accepting applications for projects until Feb. 28, 2007.

Grants are awarded to help develop education programs for use by an entire industry or for a specific work process to reduce or eliminate hazards. Applicants may be any employer or labor consortium, association, or other nonprofit organization — educational institutions may apply if they are affiliated with any of these listed groups. Applicants may apply for up to $40,000 per grant project without a requirement for any matching dollars or in-kind contributions. Funding for the grant program comes from the Workers’ Benefit Fund established by the Oregon Legislature.

Employers cannot use the program to fund training projects for their employees.

All workplace safety topics are eligible for consideration; however, preference is given to programs that support two goals listed in the Oregon OSHA Strategic Plan:

• Change the workplace culture in Oregon by increasing employer and worker awareness of, commitment to, and involvement in safety and health.
• Improve workplace safety and health for all workers, as evidenced by fewer hazards, reduced exposures, and fewer injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.

Some examples of grant projects funded within the past few years include:

• Development of safe lifting guidelines
• A checklist and video educating dairy farmers on safety
• Pictograms for training people on hazards in the workplace with a variety of learning needs or language barriers
• Manuals and videos in Russian, Spanish, and English designed for home builders
• An educational program for prevention of ergonomic-related injuries for nurses
• A CD-ROM interactive training program on preventing attacks by vicious dogs

Materials produced by grant recipients become the property of the Department of Consumer & Business Services, Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division. They are housed in the Oregon OSHA Resource Center and are available for loan to the public.

Application packets for the OR-OSHA Training and Education Grants Program are available for download from the Oregon OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org, on the “Education” page.
**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Medford conference sees record attendance**

The 16th annual Southern Oregon Occupational Safety and Health conference in October welcomed more than 400 attendees — setting a new attendance record. The record reflects the theme for this year’s conference, “Taking Safety and Health to New Heights” and the rapid pace of business growth in the Rogue Valley.

The annual conference in Medford is a collaboration between Oregon OSHA and the American Society of Safety Engineers, Southern Oregon Chapter.

![Oregon OSHA Administrator Michael Wood addresses conference attendees during the opening session.](image)

**Correction**

An article in the Fall 2006 Resource should have attributed the presentation at the National Healthcare Ergonomics conference comparing loads lifted by nurses during an average shift and the weight of vehicles to Lynda Enos, RN, of the Oregon Nurses Association.

**Oregon injury numbers decline**

Workers in Oregon continue to be safer on the job. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the statewide rate of workplace injuries and illnesses, for all employers, declined from 5.8 cases per 100 workers in 2004 to 5.4 cases per 100 workers in 2005 — a 7 percent decrease — continuing a trend since the late 1980s. The 2005 accepted disabling claims rate for workers’ compensation benefits declined 7 percent from 2004 to a record-low 1.3 cases per 100 workers.

**The “good old days”?**

Workplace safety and health in Oregon has improved significantly in the past several decades. Between July and December 1943, almost 29,000 accidents were reported to the State Industrial Accident Commission. During fiscal year 2005, Oregon OSHA investigated 250 accidents.
Oregon workers’ compensation rates rank 42nd in nation

The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) during November released its biennial study on national workers’ compensation premiums. Oregon continues to have the 10th lowest premium rates for employers in the United States.

Alaska had the highest workers’ compensation rates, and California’s rates were the second highest. Oregon neighbors Washington and Idaho came in at 36th and 32nd, respectively. In the new ranking, Oregon ranked 42nd — unchanged from the last study in 2004.

The study, based on rates that were in effect Jan. 1, 2006, ranks all 50 states and the District of Columbia according to their workers’ compensation premium rates. Low workers’ compensation costs are an important factor in creating a favorable business climate.

The 2004 study recently won an award from the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions, a nonprofit professional association of government agencies charged with the administration of workers’ compensation systems throughout the United States, Canada, and other nations and territories.

The ranking summary is available on the Web from the DCBS Information Management Division. To read the report, go to: www.cbs.state.or.us/imd/rasums/2082/06web/06_2082.pdf
The OR-OSHA Resource Center and Audiovisual Library

The mother of industrial hygiene

By Jane Kirby, OR-OSHA Resource Center coordinator

You might say Alice was a bit unusual. She became a physician in the 1890s, a time when higher education was uncommon for a man, much less a young woman from Fort Wayne, Ind. Although she might have chosen a comfortable life, Alice had a passion for social justice and intense interest in medicine, especially the emerging field of toxicology.

Alice provided medical services for destitute immigrants at Chicago’s Hull-House and investigated working conditions in grimy manufacturing plants. She did groundbreaking research on the so-called “dangerous trades” — smelting, munitions manufacturing, mining, and stonecutting — and co-wrote the classic medical textbook, “Industrial Toxicology.” Today Dr. Alice Hamilton, this unusual girl from Indiana, is recognized as the “mother of industrial hygiene,” and her 1943 autobiography, “Exploring the Dangerous Trades,” is just one of the books about workplace safety and health available in the Oregon OSHA Resource Center.

The OR-OSHA Resource Center is the only library in Oregon, and one of the few nationwide, dedicated to workplace safety and health. It includes a large collection of books by historic and contemporary leaders in the field as well as reference books, standards, and journals from the National Safety Council, the American Association of Safety Engineers, the American Industrial Hygiene Association, and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. The Resource Center also distributes OR-OSHA publications and houses the agency’s popular workplace safety and health video/DVD lending library.

Would you like to learn more about Dr. Alice Hamilton, toxic substances, or your rights to a safe and healthy workplace? The OR-OSHA Resource Center is open to the public, and a librarian is available to assist with research questions. Reach the center by telephone at (800) 922-2689 or look for it on the Web at www.orosha.org. The OR-OSHA Resource Center is located in the basement of the Labor and Industries Building at 350 Winter St. NE in Salem. Visitors are always welcome. The center is open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, including the noon hour.
Questions? OR-OSHA has field offices across Oregon. If you have questions or need information, call us toll-free (800) 922-2689, or call one of the offices listed below.

Portland
1750 N.W. Naito Pkwy., Ste. 112
Portland 97209-2533
(503) 229-5910
Consultations:
(503) 229-6193

Eugene
1140 Willagillespie, Ste. 42
Eugene, OR 97401-2101
(541) 686-7562
Consultations:
(541) 686-7913

Medford
1840 Barnett Rd., Ste. D
Medford, OR 97504-8250
(541) 776-6030
Consultations:
(541) 776-6016

Salem
1340 Tandem Ave., Ste. 160
Salem, OR 97303
(503) 378-3274
Consultations:
(503) 373-7819

Pendleton
721 SE Third St., Ste. 306
Pendleton, OR 97801-3056
(541) 276-9175
Consultations:
(541) 276-2353

Bend
Red Oak Square
1230 NE Third St., Ste. A-115
Bend, OR 97701-4374
(541) 388-6066
Consultations:
(541) 388-6068

Salem Central
350 Winter St. NE, Rm. 430
Salem, OR 97301-3882
(503) 378-3272
Fax: (503) 947-7461

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RESOURCE

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Salem, OR 97309-0405

Overwhelmed at the thought of managing your safety and health program and understanding Oregon OSHA requirements?

**We can help!**

Consultants specializing in occupational safety, health, and ergonomics are available to come to your worksite, at your convenience, to conduct a confidential evaluation of all or part of your worksite. The scope of the service is up to you! Some of the services available include:

- Safety, health, and ergonomic assessments
- Written program evaluation
- Hands-on training
- Guidance for your safety committee

**Employers, contact Oregon OSHA today to request your consultation:**

- Visit [www.orosha.org](http://www.orosha.org), and select the “Consultation” link
- Call toll-free: (800) 922-2689

This no-cost, confidential service will help you identify hazards specific to your workplace and ways to effectively eliminate or control them.