

Oregon OSHA

Forest Activities Advisory Council Minutes

December 11, 2025
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Attendees: Dave Boyd, David Grim, Denise Dethlefs, Jim Gahlsdorf, John Garland, Larry Fipps, Mark Dvorsack, Mark Standley Jr., Tim Ruyle, Wayne Oja, Steve Aulerich, Larry Kirkpatrick, Mike Spear, Gretchen Hall-Wunderlich, Jennifer Stewart, Kate Ryan, Merrill Berger, Renee Stapleton, and Tom Bozicevic.

Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions
 - Approve September 2025 meeting minutes
 - Oregon OSHA updates
 - Rulemaking: Annual Penalty Bulletin, Lead, Workplace Violence, and HazCom
 - Administrative Office temporary relocation update
 - U.S. Coast Guard rescue helicopter (Newport, OR)
 - Synthetic ropes and connectors
 - Quarterly Overnight Hospitalizations & Fatalities Report (see below)
 - Roundtable (time permitting)
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- Introductions were conducted.
- September 2025 meeting minutes were approved.

Oregon OSHA updates

Rulemaking:

- **Federal rule related to emergency response** – Oregon OSHA was told in September that this is still moving forward.
- **There were 25 rule proposals federal OSHA put out in July – 15 are respirator related.** All public comment is now closed and federal OSHA is looking at next steps, expected over the next few months. The majority of these rules would be amended instead of going away. Question: Is there any new information on dust rules or information?
 - A. There is nothing in these proposals that relates to general dust. Oregon OSHA has had recent discussion on silica found in dirt in connection to roadside workers. Employers are encouraged to reach out to Oregon OSHA consultation to do some monitoring at their site.
- **Annual Penalty Bulletin**

Oregon OSHA did temporary rulemaking regarding the CPI bulletin. As a result of the federal government shutdown, the CPI bulletin was not posted for October 2025. Oregon OSHA rule states that we go October to October for that information. Decision was made to go with the September 2025 percentage change, using the date range October 2024 – September 2025. We will likely proceed into permanent rulemaking with option for stakeholders to be part of that process.

- **Lead**
No updates since September meeting.
- **Workplace Violence**
First meeting will be January 2026. Contact information for that rulemaking group is on the Oregon OSHA website. SB 537 and HB 2024 both address pieces of workplace violence but in specific healthcare settings.
- **HazCom**
Still waiting on updates from the federal government because they said there were errors in need of corrections.

Additional update:

Administrative Office temporary relocation update

Spring or summer 2026, Oregon OSHA will be moving to the Revenue building until early 2029.

U.S. Coast Guard rescue helicopter (Newport, OR)

- This topic of not having the best equipment available (helicopter) when there is a need for high tech rescue has resurfaced since around 10 or 11 years ago. The argument is that helicopter rescue puts other people at risk (forestry, general public, fishermen, first responders). Coast Guard helicopter has winching capabilities and others do not. It has been an invaluable resource.
- Q. What can we do to retain that availability and make it permanent?
- Comment. Oregon OSHA reached out to the governor's office, Office of Emergency Management (Courtney Flathers, contact information will be shared with this group immediately and will also share more direct contact). OSHA can't send a letter to the governor requesting it or provide comment related to the current court case.
- Q. Does Oregon OSHA have data on helicopter rescue?
- A. Possibly but may be incomplete. Employers can look at the Forestry accidents/fatalities report online to see the mention of helicopter rescue. Members could mention cases that happened where helicopter use *could* have been required based on terrain or location.

Synthetic ropes and connectors

- Member: For an example of a new product, we identified a wrapper that is 1/3 of the weight of traditional logging truck wrapper. We believe it has likely spared a lot of injuries from throwing wrappers. Benefits in both safety and health of workers and benefits in productivity.
- Synthetic ropes have come out of the fishing industry that are stronger and better coated than previous versions. Estimates in testing showed 22-86% possible increase in load capabilities. In tests, it was a straight line pull. In using different configurations of knots, the best we got was 60% breaking strength. So we view knots using synthetic rope to be unsuitable. We have capability to put load cells to test the strength of the rope.

- A. There is an understanding that there may be different configuration of style per manufacturers. There is not a consensus standard that we can point to, say they must meet a minimum requirement.
- Comment. The item could be tagged with working load information and the synthetic material that it is made of. For lifting, slings have a 5:1 safety factor, but in logging we use a 3:1 safety factor. Testing can be done, but it needs to be put into practice in settings where employees would not be in danger. End connectors have a color that shows up when it is time for replacement. Our suggestion is to try on a grapple yarder for example, so there is no risk of injury. In tests, metal shackles can have sharp edges and cut rope, and the rope more easily flattens. We would like OSHA working together with logging employers with this new technology.
- Oregon OSHA is being cautious. Rules have to be at least as effective as federal OSHA. We have to back up our actions.
- Comment. Federal plan excludes cable logging. Oregon OSHA does not have any codes related to synthetic end connectors. Employers want the support of Oregon OSHA.
- A. There are Division 1 rules that could be used when vertical rules do not exist.
- Comment. Connectors are labeled with certified loads, materials, and have microchip in them to check on capabilities and the need for repair. The strap is to keep two strength pieces in line, nothing to do with strength capability.
- A. It would be dependent on the connector – what members of this group are using may be working. In other situations, it may be configured differently, so there may be hazards in how it is configured. How can we say, these “five” components be the same when there are differences across the board.
- Q. What can employers do to get to the point of working with Oregon OSHA on this?
- A. Not all will be used as straight pulls. Maybe we look at trying to define those minimum characteristics/pieces. We need to work together to get all of these answers. Because we can't say to use manufacturer guidelines as only option. The suggestion is for a work group only on this topic to be formed.
- Comment. Variance request did not work out so employers need to know steps, information to put in variance request. Issue is that there is no Oregon OSHA rule to connect to a variance. We need to put this into practice to get this information.
- Oregon OSHA would be interested in learning quality control requirements of the synthetic connectors. Member feels like this goes beyond what is required per Oregon code for other logging products.
- Q. What Oregon OSHA rule is being broken that would require a variance?
- Comment. Yes, a variance can be gotten from Division 1.

Overnight Hospitalizations & Fatalities Report (9/1/2025 – 12/8/2025)

10/1/25 – Hospitalization – Struck By

A Choker Setter/Rigging Slinger was struck by a log in the turn which broke free and was slung an approximate 90 feet to where the injured employee was struck. Employee was transported to Mercy Medical Center and is due to be transferred to Eugene or Portland.

11/10/25 – Fatality – Struck By

While helicopter logging, a snag fell and struck the employee, a choker setter, directly in the head.

Roundtable

- Twelve podcasts on forestry safety will be available on Youtube channel due to an Oregon OSHA grant. These cover a variety of topics and can be used in safety meetings.
- A LifeFlight plane, then helicopter availability in Hillsboro.
- Upcoming conferences that may interest this group.

Next meeting is March 12, 2026.