

Safety Lines

Harvest season reminder: Grain safety, hazard awareness

Harvest season is a good time to refresh farm workers' knowledge about the hazards associated with grain. The six main hazards associated with work at grain facilities are: entrapment or engulfment in grain; falls; equipment entanglement; being struck by an object; combustible-dust explosions; and electrocutions.

In the past five years, Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance has seen two fatalities and eight serious injuries associated with these hazards. Both fatalities were the result of grain engulfment. According to federal OSHA's Hazard Alert "Dangers of engulfment and suffocation in grain bins" a person can become buried in grain in less than 11 seconds; in five seconds, the person would be unable to free themselves without help. Flowing grain is not forgiving.



For the eight serious injuries, five were related to walking and working surfaces (fall hazards) and one each was related to combustible dust explosions, engulfment and machine guarding.

During the same time period, MNOSHA Compliance's most cited standards in the grain industry related to grain-bin entry and walking-working surfaces. Other commonly cited standards included those for preventive maintenance, housekeeping, training and permit-required confined spaces (such as boot pits).

Employers and employees can learn more about these standards and grain-industry hazards, as well as ways to protect workers' lives in the grain industry, from the following resources:

- 29 CFR 1910.272, Grain handling facilities standards;
- the federal OSHA grain-handling webpage at [osha.gov/SLTC/grainhandling](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/grainhandling);
- the MNOSHA Compliance grain-handling webpage at dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-grain-handling-information-fatalities; and
- MNOSHA Compliance at 651-284-5050, 877-470-6742 or osha.compliance@state.mn.us.

2021 workplace injury, illness, fatality rates released soon

The 2021 injury and illness rates will be available Nov. 9 and the 2021 fatal occupational injury numbers will tentatively be published Dec. 16. The tables will be available at bls.gov/iif/oshstate.htm#MN.

More than \$2.2M safety grant funds awarded in state-fiscal-year 2022

During the 2022 state fiscal year (July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022), Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Workplace Safety Consultation awarded Safety Grant Program funding to 244 employers, totaling more than \$2.2 million for projects exceeding \$14 million.

The Safety Grant Program awards funds up to \$10,000 to qualifying employers for projects designed to reduce the risk of injury and illness to their workers. To qualify, an employer must meet the following conditions.

- The employer has been in business for at least two years.
- The employer has at least one employee.
- The employer has workers' compensation insurance.
- The employer has had an on-site hazard survey conducted by a qualified safety professional and a written report of the findings and recommendations to reduce the risk of injury or illness to employees, including for: specific safety practices or equipment; training for purchased equipment; and tuition reimbursement. A qualified safety professional includes:
 - a MNOSHA Compliance investigator;
 - a MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation consultant;
 - an in-house safety and health committee;
 - a workers' compensation insurance underwriter;
 - a private consultant; or
 - a person under contract with the Assigned Risk Plan.
- The employer has the knowledge and experience to complete the project and is committed to its implementation.
- The employer is able to complete the project within 120 days of a fully executed contract.



When grant applications are received, each application is reviewed and scored against the qualifying criteria, with the most impactful projects receiving funding. Priority industries include:

- construction and manufacturing – equipment that reduces worker exposure to respirable, crystalline silica;
- excavation and trenching – equipment that safeguards workers from cave-in;
- farming – equipment including rollover protective structures (ROPS) for tractors;
- grain-handling facilities;
- residential construction – fall protection equipment; and
- window washing.

For more information, contact MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation at dli.grants@state.mn.us, 651-284-5060 or 800-731-7232.

Free on-site safety and health consultations available

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Workplace Safety Consultation offers free consultation services, where employers can find out about potential hazards at their worksites, improve safety management systems and apply for grants to abate safety standards.

The program targets small, high-hazard businesses. It is separate from Minnesota OSHA Compliance inspection activities and no citations are issued as part of a consultation visit.

Learn more and request a consultation

Web: dli.mn.gov • Email: osha.consultation@state.mn.us • Phone: 651-284-5060



Nov. 15 Construction Seminar: Build an effective safety programs

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance's free Construction Seminars feature a presentation about a specific construction safety or health topic – with time for questions, answers and input – plus an update from MNOSHA Compliance about what's currently happening regarding investigations.

On Tuesday, Nov. 15, join MNOSHA Compliance at 7 a.m., in person or online, for a discussion about building an effective safety program in construction. Presenters include a MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation consultant and a contractor.

Get complete information at dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars.



The remaining Construction Seminar dates are Jan. 17, March 21 and May 16, 2023.



Are you registered to vote?

The Minnesota Secretary of State website has everything you need to know about voting in Minnesota. Visit sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting to register to vote, find out where and how you can cast your vote, what's on your ballot and more.

MNOSHA fatality, serious-injury investigations summaries online

Each month, Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance publishes current, updated summaries of its fatality investigations and serious-injury investigations. For the federal-fiscal-year that began Oct. 1, 2022, MNOSHA Compliance has investigated one fatality as of Oct. 27.

The information provided about each investigation is:

- the inspection number, date of incident and worksite city;
- the type of business and number of employees;
- a description of the event; and
- the outcome of the MNOSHA Compliance investigation.



The summaries, plus other helpful workplace safety and health information from MNOSHA, are available at dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-resources-all-industries.

Translated materials, Language Line available via DLI website

The Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) posts its available translated materials online at dli.mn.gov/about-department/translated-materials. It has documents available in Chinese, Hmong, Karen, Somali and Spanish. A few other documents throughout the website are available in additional languages.

DLI also has access to Language Line, a free language translation phone service for limited-English speakers. If DLI help is needed, view the contact information at dli.mn.gov/about-department/about-dli/contact-us, call and one of our employees will get in touch with an interpreter in the needed language.

Workplace mental health, suicide prevention

Suicide is a leading cause of death among working age adults in the United States. It deeply impacts workers, families and communities. There were approximately 1.2 million suicide attempts in America in 2020. Tragically, more than 45,000 of these attempts were fatal, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹ The construction industry has one of the highest rates of suicide among all occupations – four times higher than in the general population.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one in five adults are living with a mental health condition, such as anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress.² In June 2020, the CDC found that 40% of U.S. adults were struggling with mental health or substance abuse and 11% seriously considered suicide.³ Work-related stress can have an impact on mental health and, without proper support, could lead to substance abuse or even suicide. Workers in the construction industry are generally at higher risk for suicide due to work-related stress factors, including seasonal or temporary employment, demanding work schedules and serious injuries, which are sometimes treated with opioids. Not addressing the underlying stressors or injuries can exacerbate mental health symptoms and may increase the risk of substance abuse or even suicide.

By demonstrating their commitment to a safe and healthy workplace, employers can play an important role in reducing stigma and promoting mental health. In return they may experience benefits such as improved workplace safety, higher morale, increased productivity, reduced turnover and decreased operating costs.



Learn how to develop mental health and safety programs to help

workers get the resources they need, which are available at [osha.gov/preventingsuicides](https://www.osha.gov/preventingsuicides). For example:

- Strive to create a workplace environment that fosters open communication and a sense of belonging.
- Implement a workplace safety and health program that proactively identifies and addresses hazards that could lead to injuries or illnesses.
- Provide resources and programs that promote employee health and well-being and support a work/life balance.
- Inform employees of resources and treatment services available for mental health and substance use disorders through employee assistance or health insurance programs, or in the community.
- Provide accommodations and return-to-work assistance for employees seeking treatment or in recovery.

Use and share resources from federal OSHA and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), such as:

- OSHA poster – Suicide prevention: Five things you should know (OSHA publication [4180 English](#) and [4181 Spanish](#))
- OSHA webpage – [Recommended practices for safety and health programs](#)
- OSHA online safety and health topics – [Preventing suicides](#); and [Long work hours, extended or irregular shifts and worker fatigue](#)
- NIOSH workplace safety and health topics – [Opioids in the workplace](#); and [Workplace-supported recovery program](#)

When you work closely with someone, you may sense when something is wrong. If you are concerned about a coworker, talk with them privately and listen without judgment. Encourage them to get help. If someone is in crisis, stay with them and get help. If you believe a coworker is at immediate risk of suicide, stay with them until you can get further help. Contact emergency services or call 988 for the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#).

Together, we can stop the stigma and address mental health of American workers.

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports. (2020, February 20). Retrieved Feb. 9, 2021.

²The [2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\)](#) by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#).

³Czeisler MÉ, Lane RI, Petrosky E, et al. Mental Health, Substance Use and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, June 24-30, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1049-1057. DOI: [dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6932a1](https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6932a1).

Musculoskeletal disorder cases increased in 2020

By Brian Zaidman, Research and Statistics

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) accounted for 24% of all OSHA-recordable cases involving one or more days away from work in 2020. The estimated number of MSD cases in 2020 was 12% higher than the 2019 estimate (Figure 1) and 7% higher than the 2016 estimate.

The 2020 increase was evident for both male and female workers. The estimated number of MSD cases among men had decreased from 2017 to 2019 before increasing by 14% in 2020. The estimated number of MSD cases among women was essentially unchanged from 2016 through 2019 and increased by 9% in 2020.

Four major occupation groups each had more than 1,000 estimated MSD cases in 2020 (Figure 2). Together, they accounted for 78% of Minnesota’s MSD cases. This is an increase from earlier years, with the percentage in 2018 dipping to 61%. The estimated number of MSD cases in 2018 was lower than the estimated number in 2016 for three of the four occupations and the estimates increased from 2018 to 2020 for four occupation groups.

Especially notable was the increase among health care practitioners and technical workers, doubling in number from 2018 to 2020. MSD cases among transportation and material moving workers increased by 50% (740 cases) from 2019 to 2020. While labor shortages and turnover due to the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to these increases in MSD cases, 2019 also saw higher MSD case numbers than in 2018.

Figure 1. Number of musculoskeletal disorder cases with one or more days away from work, Minnesota

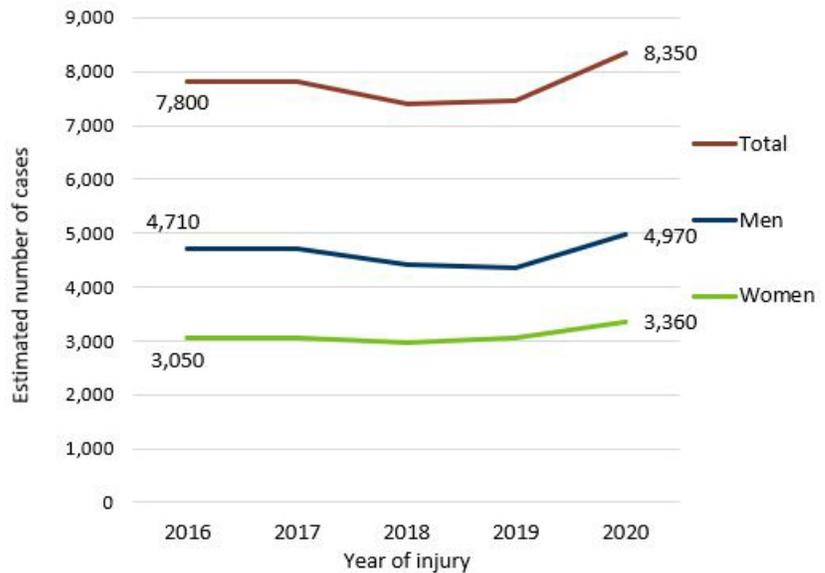
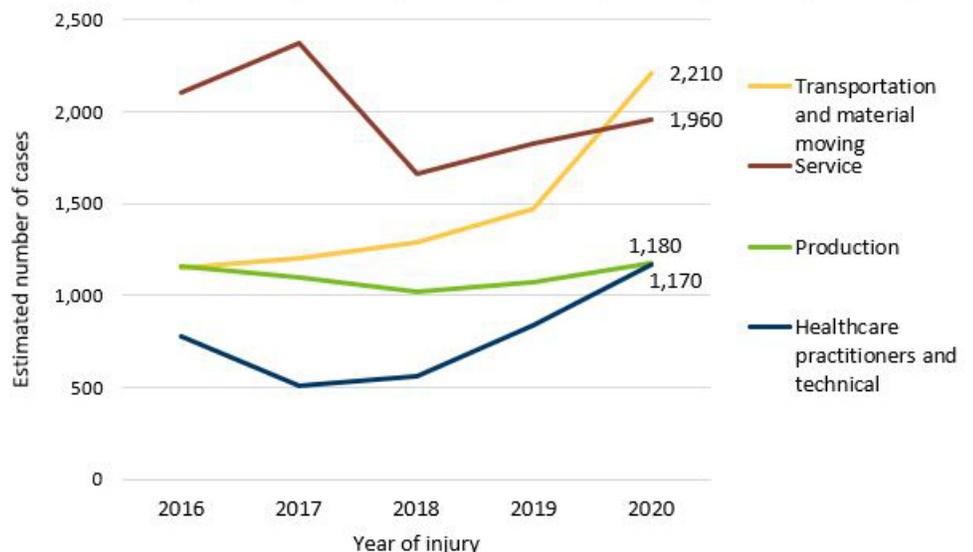


Figure 2 Number of musculoskeletal disorder cases with one or more days away from work, selected occupation groups, Minnesota



MNOSHA Compliance signs safety, health partnerships

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance recently signed six Level 3 Cooperative Compliance Partnerships on six projects. The partnerships were all signed under the Construction Health and Safety Excellence (CHASE) Minnesota agreement, between Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Minnesota and MNOSHA Compliance.

Level 3 is the peak level of MNOSHA Compliance partnerships, with applicants striving to be an industry leader with very comprehensive safety and health programs. The partnerships acknowledge the importance of providing a safe, healthful work environment in construction and seek a working relationship that creates mutual trust and respect among all parties – including project owners and construction workers – involved in the construction process. Participants may achieve three award levels: basic, intermediate and peak.

Complete information about MNOSHA's Cooperative Compliance Partnerships is online at:

- dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-partnership-programs.



Benike Construction • F&M Bank • Rochester, Minnesota



Meyer Contracting • North Shore Circle Street Improvement • Forest Lake, Minnesota



Mortenson Company • Blake School Early Learning Center • Hopkins, Minnesota



Park Construction Company • Evanswood Street and Utility Improvement, Phase 1 • Maple Grove, Minnesota

Partnerships, continues ...



VEIT • Bryant Avenue Reconstruction • Minneapolis



VEIT • Cascade Lake Park Improvement • Rochester, Minnesota

Reviewing the basics: Recordkeeping training offered in January

Maintaining an accurate OSHA log of recordable work-related injuries and illnesses is an important skill that benefits employers, workers, safety professionals and government agencies. The Department of Labor and Industry is offering two free, introductory-level training sessions about OSHA recordkeeping in January. **Registration is required.**

Dates, times, registration

- Jan. 13 – 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Jan. 20 – 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- [Registration available online soon](#)

Topics

- Recordability of injuries and illnesses
- Differences between OSHA cases and workers' compensation claims
- Classifying cases
- Counting time
- Privacy cases
- How many logs to keep
- Maintaining logs
- Creating a log summary
- Reporting log data to OSHA
- Recording COVID-19 cases



More information

For more information about the training session, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard.

Minnesota OSHA's calendar of events*

November 2022

- Nov. 15** **Construction Seminar: How to build an effective safety program in construction**
dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars
- Nov. 18** **Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Council**
dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-advisory-council

December 2022

- Dec. 2** **Occupational Safety and Health Review Board**
dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-review-board

January 2023

- Jan. 13** **Free training: Basics of OSHA recordkeeping**
dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard
- Jan. 17** **Construction Seminar: Topic to be determined**
dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars
- Jan. 20** **Free training: Basics of OSHA recordkeeping**
dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard

****All dates subject to change.***

See more at dli.mn.gov/about-department/about-dli/events-minnesota-osh