

OSHA ALLIANCE FORUM SUMMARY

OSHA Initiatives

Presented by Assistant Secretary of Labor, Doug Parker, the key initiatives remain largely unchanged from past years. However, there is a bit more drive toward tangible results instead of the previously encountered awareness messaging.

- Fall Protection – Identified as the clear number 1 priority to OSHA; they are asking for maximum effort to increase compliance and reduce injury.
- Silica Dust – This was a common theme throughout the day; OSHA clearly identified this as second only to fall protection on their priority list.
- Heat Rule – OSHA wants more entities to provide comments through the formalized process prior to the finalization of the new Heat Rule.
- Fatal Four – OSHA is working to expand this from the historic construction backdrop and is actively pushing this into warehousing and other industries.
- Mental Health – A common theme in all OSHA events, the main messages were to expand efforts and the *kinds* of efforts employers, alliances, and any other entity. This needs to be a top priority across the country, across all levels of all organizations.
- Transportation – Working to develop a plan with several other government agencies and private (including the NSC) to impact the injury rates on the national roadway system.
- Voluntary Protection Program – This program has done a great deal of good, but the beneficiaries have largely been larger employers while the smaller employer represents a greater area of need. OSHA is working to revamp the system to better aid smaller employers.

Construction Hot Topics

Tim Irving, Acting Director of the Department of Construction, provided a walkthrough of construction specific topics.

- OSHA has added more Industrial Hygienists and PHDs to their staff.
- The Listen Up campaign is working on hearing protection training for use by alliance members.
- Hard Hat to Helmet is seeing major success, and manufacturing is starting to keep up with demand.

- Prevention through Design is a major focus of DOC; analysis reveals the four key players - Owners, Employer, Designer / Manufacturer, and General Contractor – typically have incomplete information and poor communication with the other three.
- Suicide Prevention is a top priority with teams working on action plans. Mental health is now included in OSHA 10 & 30 mandatory content.

Enforcement Update

Dionne Williams, Deputy Director for Department of Enforcement Programs, provided a summary of enforcement initiatives.

- OSHA inspections are finally back to pre-covid levels.
- Permit Required Confined Space, Combustible Dusts, Silica Dust Exposure, and Excessive Heat are now classified as imminent dangers.
- Regional directors now have the ability to ungroup citations but with complex considerations.
- Process Safety Management update from 2024 is being enforced
- Warehousing guidance includes retail spaces; 1,400+ focused inspections through August 2024.
- Site Specific Targeting is Non-Construction with more than 20 employees
- Severe Violator Enforcement Program – OSHA is working to target employers in any industry who move (like construction sites)
- Silica is the #1 Health Enforcement focus
- OSHA testing results show 25% of work environments they have tested are over the PEL
- Heat Stress enforcement is done through the NEP and General Duty with no Heat Standard yet
- Top Citations in 2024 (General Industry- through Mid Sept)
 1. Lockout Tagout
 2. Haz Com
 3. Respiratory Protection
 4. Powered Industrial Trucks
 5. Machine Guarding
 6. Electrical; General

7. Electrical; Wiring methods, components & equipment
8. PPE \ *No explanation of how this was separated out*
9. PPE /
10. Portable fire extinguishers

NIOSH UPDATE

John Piacentino, Deputy Director for Programs, gave a highly detailed look into several aspects of how NIOSH Operates and various areas towards which their research is currently directed. Among those topics was:

- AI and how to drive it toward true human behavior for research maximization.
- Fit testing through facial scans.
- Expanded respiratory protection considerations (child respirators, bearded users, etc.).
- Testing requirements and timeline constraints.
- Research to reveal actual key drivers of change vs. previously held assumptions.
- Human sensory, AI & robotic task execution as the three key innovations in current work environments.
- Work's role in the lives of the US population; how work intertwines with all other aspects of life to impact safety and health of the workforce as a whole.
- WellBQ – Index based on worker well-being as a holistic construct.

OSHA's Activities

In an effort to improve their understanding and work products, OSHA is:

- Revamping their learning materials to modernize them with feedback from their Alliances.
- Soliciting input from alliances to evaluate the needs and capabilities of the industries.
- Increasing committee sizes to afford additional input & perspective.
- Researching and developing opportunities in digital solutions including learning management systems.
- Focusing on safety management system education with updated theory and guidance including video series and other multimedia resources.
- Pushing **Safety as a Core Value** and **Building a Culture of Safety**

- Pushing employers to embrace the fact that their safety management system does not have to be the most robust system ever, but hitting on key elements and actively improving it is a must regardless of the organization's size.