

The Safety & Health Advisor

Spring 2021



OSHA 2021 Safety Stand-Down

Preventable falls continue to be a concern for OSHA, particularly in the construction industry. The 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data indicated that there were 392 fatal falls from elevation from a total of 1,066 construction fatalities (almost 37%). For all industries in 2019 there were 711 fatal falls from elevation from a total of 5,333 fatalities (just over 13%)

OSHA has designated the week of **May 3-7, 2021** for their annual voluntary Safety Stand-Down event. While the primary focus in the past has been on the construction industry, OSHA welcomes any general industry organization to participate in this “fall prevention” awareness event to help reduce fall related fatalities and injuries. If you have employees that work (or may work) at heights over six (6) feet, (*4 feet for General Industry*) such as on roofs, scaffolds, platforms, towers, trees or use ladders or aerial lifts in their work, whether indoors or outdoors, this event and the awareness resources that OSHA provides could be beneficial for employee education or training or for developing or updating your fall prevention safety program.



Companies can conduct a Safety Stand-Down by having employees take a break during the workday to have a toolbox talk or meeting about fall hazards and prevention or hold another safety activity such as conducting safety equipment inspections, developing rescue plans, or discussing job specific hazards. Employers are encouraged to plan a stand-down event that works best for their workplace operation.

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See [Suggestions to Prepare for a Successful "Stand-Down"](#) and [Highlights from the Past Stand-Downs](#).

OSHA also hosts an Events page with events that are free and open to the public to help employers and employees find events in your area.

Resources for this initiative include downloadable fact sheets, posters, wallet cards, training materials and publications about fall protection, ladder and scaffold safety. There are additional links to fall prevention videos, outreach and partner materials from other safety organizations.

Organizations formally participating in the Safety Stand-Down can receive a “Certificate of Participation” after completing the event by visiting the OSHA [Stand-Down](#) website to download a Certificate. Employers will be able to provide feedback based on their experience. The certificate pages will be active on May 3, 2021 at OSHA's [Stop Falls Stand-Down](#) page and at the [National Safety Council's \(NSC\)](#) webpages.

The OSHA Training Institute Education Center (OTIEC) at Keene State College will also offer a “**complimentary**” online Fall Protection course #7405 throughout Stand-Down week. If interested you may get additional information and register at:

<https://oshaedne.com/stand-down-to-save-lives-may-3-7-2021/> For more information and resources go to: <https://www.osha.gov/stop-falls-stand-down>



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Focus on Ladder Safety

Whether on the construction jobsite or while performing building maintenance and overhead repair work, ladder safety basics should never be taken for granted. Each year more than 160,000 people are injured as a result of not following proper ladder safety precautions. Of these, nearly 300 accidents result in death. Understanding the different types of ladders and proper selection, as well as safe ladder work practices are critical to preventing falls and other types of injuries.



For the fifth year, The American Ladder Institute (ALI) has designated March as National “Ladder Safety Month”. Some of their main goals are to increase awareness of why ladder safety is so important to reduce the number of injuries and fatalities caused by the misuse of ladders, increase ladder safety training including best practices, lower the rankings of ladder-related safety citations on OSHA’s yearly “Top 10 Citations List”, and spread overall awareness about ladder safety best practices, both at work and at home. On their website, www.americanladderinstitute.org

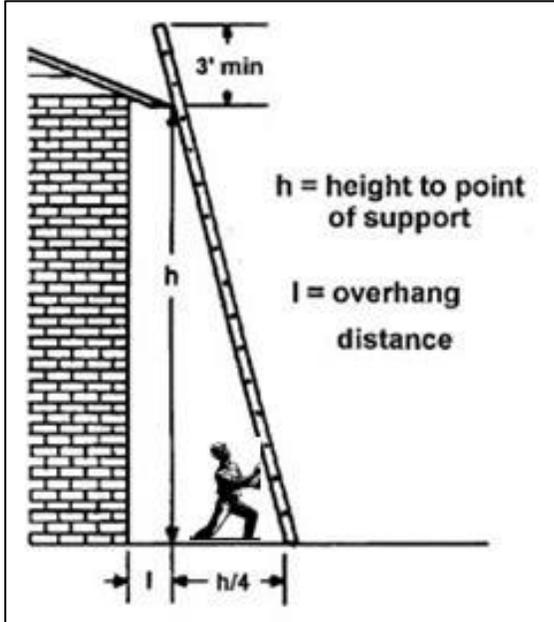
ALI provides free access to safety training modules specific to stepladders, single and extension ladders, articulated ladders, and mobile ladders. Each module contains well designed instructional videos ranging from 13 to 25 minutes as well as certification tests for each type of ladder. Participants can print a formal certificate of completion after successfully passing each module which can be used to demonstrate competency. If you are responsible for providing ladder safety training to others within your organization, they also provide additional free tools to setup and manage training participants, as well as review their progression and test scores.

Here are some helpful tips to always keep in mind when using a ladder (provided by OSHA):

- Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards! – Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal (aluminum) ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.
- Always maintain a 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing (see diagram).
- Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps or feet.
- Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
- Do not use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.
- Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support (see diagram). Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.
- The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface.

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- A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.

OSHA also provides a number of free ladder safety publications and fact sheets in English and Spanish. Refer to this [link](#) for a summary of their publications related to ladders. CDC/NIOSH also publishes ladder safety information, including a ladder safety app at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/mobileapp.html>

Distracted Driving Awareness Month

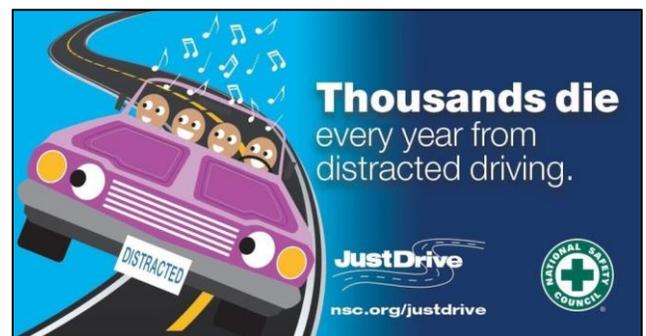
For the first time since 2007, preliminary data from the [National Safety Council](#) show that as many as [42,060 people are estimated to have died](#) in motor vehicle crashes in 2020. **That marks an 8% increase over 2019 in a year where people drove significantly less frequently because of the pandemic.** The preliminary estimated rate of death on the roads last year spiked 24% over the previous 12-month period,

despite miles driven dropping 13%. The increase in the rate of death is the highest estimated year-over-year jump that NSC has calculated since 1924 – 96 years! "We believe that the open roads really gave drivers an open invitation marked open season on reckless driving," Maureen Vogel, director of communications at NSC, said in a recent interview with ABC News. While the final data will determine causation, Vogel said states saw increases in speeding, **distracted** and, in some cases, impaired driving.

The National Safety Council (NSC) reports that cell phone use while driving leads to 1.6 million crashes each year. Nearly 390,000 injuries occur each year from accidents caused by texting while driving. One (1) out of every four car accidents in the United States is caused by texting and driving.

According to the NSC, one of the immediate life-saving measures that would set the nation on a [road to zero](#) deaths are [laws](#) extending or banning all cell phone use, including hands-free, to all drivers, not just teens. NSC recommends that states with existing bans should upgrade enforcement from secondary to a primary violation to send a stronger message. April is NSC's *Distracted Driving Awareness Month*. Consider creating a distracted driving program by providing your workforce with ready-made communications and resources. Sign up at <https://cloud.safe.nsc.org/ddam> and you'll receive access to materials. Different resources are published each week.

NSC has created a free "Safe Driving Kit". It has all the materials you need to build leadership support for a cell phone policy and tools to communicate to employees. It can be downloaded at <https://cloud.safe.nsc.org/safe-driving-kit>.



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Commercial Kitchen Safety

Employees working in commercial kitchens can be exposed to numerous hazards which could lead to various injuries and illnesses. Considering that the typical kitchen has open flames, sharp knives, boiling liquids, cleaning chemicals, and a host of other conditions which could cause harm certainly creates challenges for kitchen managers and staff. However, implementation of a team-based approach (who would you suggest be part of this team?) can put safety within reach.

Understanding and recognizing actual and potential hazards is the first step towards developing safe work conditions and behaviors. Let's take a look at the leading causes of injuries within commercial kitchens, and ways to help keep employees safe.

Knife Cuts: Improper knife use, handling, storage, and maintenance all can contribute to cuts. While it may seem counterintuitive, sharp knives are much safer than dull knives. Knives not properly sharpened and honed require more force and don't cut through food as easily. Knives left out on countertops, in sinks, or otherwise not stored correctly can also cause injury.

A safety plan should include training to help minimize the risk of personal injury and keep your kitchen running smoothly. Training elements should include:

- **Sharpening-**All knives should be sharpened regularly. Honing steels should be available and used frequently.
- **Knife Selection-**Chose a blade that is proportional to the food being cut. For example, a small paring knife will not be very useful for butchering a large cut of meat, so use a cleaver instead. Never use your knife for anything but cutting food. Using your knife for other tasks could not only put your safety at risk, but it could also damage your knife.
 - **Proper Use-** Always use a cutting board when cutting products. Be aware of how the knife is held, and use a safe grip.
 - **Cleaning-**To ensure sanitation and maintain durability it is essential that knives are washed properly. Dishwashers may be a convenient way to wash knives if they are dishwasher safe. If so,

make sure they are positioned so the blade with not cut while being removed.

- **Storage-**A designated knife storage space keeps your kitchen organized and also encourages a safe knife routine. Ideally knives should be in two places only, in the user's hand or in a proper knife rack or holder. Knives should never be placed in drawers or left out.
- **Inspection-**Chipped, bent, or otherwise damaged knives are an accident waiting to happen. Implement a routine inspection schedule to assure all cutlery is in good working order. All damaged knives should be immediately removed from service

Slips, Trips, and Falls: Greasy floors, buckled mats, or damaged floor surfaces can all lead to a fall and serious injury. Other factors such as poorly lit areas, floor level changes, and improper footwear also have to be considered. Regular self-audits of kitchen flooring should be performed to ensure that all drains are clear and functioning, floor mats are removed and cleaned regularly, degreasers are used to get rid of grease and soils, and that there are no cracks, holes, or other damaged floor surfaces. Use non-slip matting in kitchen areas that tend to be wet.

Beware that some matting might not be effective in areas that tend to be greasy. In those areas, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) recommends using no-skid waxes and floor surfaces coated with grit to create non-slip surfaces.

Require all kitchen employees to wear slip-resistive shoes that cover the entire foot. According to the National Floor Surface Institute, 24% of slips and falls are caused by improper footwear. Some shoe manufacturers have products with slip-resistant soles and also provide special employer purchasing arrangements. The following listing is not complete and does not constitute a product endorsement.

Iron Age Shoes: www.ironageshoes.com

Web Restaurant Store: [Web Restaurant Store - Shoes](#)

Shoes for Crews: www.shoesforcrews.com

Lifting Strains and Sprains: Most kitchen lifting injuries occur due to repeated micro tears in the joints and ligaments of the spine and the muscles of the back.

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Poor posture when lifting or pulling heavy objects causes pain to accumulate and range of motion to decrease. Twisting, straining or bending while lifting or pulling can cause strain on muscles, ligaments, joints and spinal discs that result in injuries.

To minimize these movements, use carts, dollies, hand trucks and other mechanical lifting devices whenever possible. Store heavier items in middle shelves, below the shoulder and above the knee. Using awkward postures while serving food and bussing tables may lead to neck, shoulder and back strain.

Burns: Burns from open flames, hot handles, or boiling liquids are painful and can cause significant injury. Avoid overcrowding cookware on stovetops, and always turn handles away from burners, never sticking out. Avoid wearing loose clothing when working around ranges, ovens or other cooking appliances, and always keep sleeves buttoned. Do not leave hot oil or grease unattended for any period of time, and always ask for help if moving heavy pots.



Working with fryers can expose workers to a number of burn hazards. There are a number of steps that can be taken to ensure worker safety when using fryers.

- Wear protective clothing and use hot pads, pot holders, gloves or mitts
- Shake off excess ice crystals before placing fryer baskets in hot oil
- Fill fryer baskets no more than halfway
- Do not lean over or stand too close to hot oil
- Follow directions when adding or disposing of oil
- Be sure all fryers have protective baffles to prevent oil splashing

Chemical Safety: Sanitizers, soaps, oven cleaners, deep fryer cleaners, degreasers, floor cleansers and others are all used in commercial kitchens. Improper storage, handling, and disposal of these materials can have grave consequences. Skin irritation, infection, burns, and respiratory harm can all result if employees if the proper precautions are in place.

In 2019 a restaurant manager in Massachusetts died as a result from inhalation of gases created by improperly mixed chemicals. To protect against chemical harm it is important to train employees how to handle chemical products properly.

- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE). OSHA requires all employers to provide workers with PPE including gloves, aprons, eye protection and more.
- Never mix chlorine and ammonia. When combined these chemicals create a gas which can be deadly.
- Train employees to read and understand Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and chemical labels. These provide information on proper storage, handling, mixing, and PPE.
- Label cleaning bottles. Cleaning or spray bottles require labels stating the chemical is and what the hazards are.
- Use eco-friendly products wherever possible. Consult with your vendor to determine which chemicals can be swapped out for safer alternatives.

Kitchen safety training should be provided to all staff before they are permitted to start their jobs. This video is great way to introduce safety to your kitchen employees. Also, restaurants that are re-opening from the pandemic may want to review this guidance document from the American Industrial Hygiene Association.

If you need assistance in evaluating your ergonomics or safety and health program, please contact Neal Freedman, John Cotnam, Mark Hickox or Rick Muller from Atlantic Charter's Safety and Health Department at (617) 488-6500.