



NEWS RELEASE

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DIR and Cal/OSHA Honor Workers' Memorial Day

Oakland—On [Workers' Memorial Day 2020](#), the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and its Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) commemorate the workers who have lost their lives on the job in California. This international day of remembrance is held annually on April 28, the date Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 which guarantees all workers the right to a safe and healthful workplace.

“Today we honor those workers who have died on the job,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Doug Parker. “California is renewing and strengthening its commitment to protecting the workers in our state from injury and illness, which is particularly important at this time.”

[There were a total of 422 fatal workplace injuries in California in 2018](#). California’s rate of fatal workplace incidents per 100,000 workers remains stable with slight fluctuations since 2008, and has consistently been lower than the national rate.

Cal/OSHA was the first in the nation to adopt a general industry Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) regulation in 1991, to set a standard for all employers across the state on identifying, preventing and training employees on workplace hazards.

Workers in California are protected by permissible exposure limits that go beyond the corresponding federal minimums and cover a wider variety of chemicals. California is proud to have adopted the most comprehensive workplace violence prevention in health care standard in the country and the only state to enact a standard to protect health care workers and other workers from aerosol transmissible diseases.

“The workplace hazard posed by the COVID-19 pandemic serves as a reminder of why OSHA was created 50 years ago—to protect every worker from unsafe and unhealthy working conditions,” said Chief Parker.

To address the hazards related to COVID-19, Cal/OSHA has posted [infection prevention guidance for employers and workers](#). This guidance helps employers comply with requirements to keep employees safe, and gives workers information on how to protect themselves and prevent the spread of disease.

Workers in the state are also protected by the nation's first heat illness prevention regulation, which was adopted on an emergency basis in 2005 and subsequently amended to add high-heat procedures and other important requirements to protect outdoor workers and set baseline requirements for water, rest and shade to prevent heat illness.

After the most destructive fire season in the state's history in 2018, Cal/OSHA [adopted](#) an emergency regulation to protect workers from the harmful effects of wildfire smoke and is working to make the regulation permanent. All together, these efforts provide California workers with greater protections and maintain workplace injury and fatality rates below the national average.

The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, or [Cal/OSHA](#), is the division within the Department of Industrial Relations that helps protect California's workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734).

Contact: Erika Monterroza / Peter Melton, Communications@dir.ca.gov, (510) 286-1161.

The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.