

N E W S R E L E A S E

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DIR Honors Workers' Memorial Day

Oakland—Today on [Workers' Memorial Day 2017](#), the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) honors the California men and women who have lost their lives on the job. This international day of remembrance is held annually on April 28, the date Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 which ensures all workers the right to safety on the job.

“On this day we remember the California workers who lost their lives at work and renew our commitment to workplace safety,” said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations. “DIR will continue to educate workers on their rights and employers on their responsibilities in order to prevent injuries and deaths at work.”

[A total of 388 Californians lost their lives on the job in 2015](#), nearly half of them Latino. The causes of death range from preventable accidents to instances of workplace violence, including the shooting incident that claimed 14 victims in San Bernardino on December 2, 2015. These tragedies affect communities both large and small throughout the state.

“Prevention is key for workplace safety,” said Juliann Sum, Chief of the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA). “Cal/OSHA improves working conditions for all workers through effective enforcement and education and outreach, including forming partnerships with employers that have outstanding injury and illness prevention programs. We’ve also increased workplace safety outreach and education to Spanish-speaking workers, with a focus on high-hazard work.”

Cal/OSHA was the first in the nation to adopt a statewide Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) standard in 1991 and also the first to adopt an emergency heat illness prevention regulation in 2005. The emergency regulation became law in 2006 and was amended in 2010 to add high-heat procedures to protect outdoor workers in industries including agriculture, construction, landscaping and oil and gas extraction. The heat illness prevention regulation was further amended in 2015 to increase worker access to

water, lower the temperature trigger for shade and expand training for outdoor workers to recognize and address the signs and symptoms of heat illness.

Additionally, workers across the state are protected by permissible exposure limits that go beyond the federal minimums and cover a wider variety of chemicals. California is proud to maintain the most comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan in the country and to be the only state to enact occupational aerosol transmissible disease regulations. Together these efforts help California maintain workplace injury and fatality rates below the national average.

[Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers to improve their safety and health 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). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 provides recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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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.