

N E W S R E L E A S E

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DIR Commemorates Workers' Memorial Day, Recommits to Improving Workplace Safety in California

Oakland—[Workers' Memorial Day 2015](#) honors the men and women who were injured or died on the job in California and throughout the world. This international day of remembrance and action is held annually on April 28, the date when Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 which promises every worker the right to a safe job.

“On this day we renew the nation’s 45-year commitment to workplace safety and remember the California workers who lost their lives while on the job,” said DIR Director Christine Baker. “Employers who maintain safe working conditions are building a more prosperous California by protecting workers and preventing costly injuries.”

Cal/OSHA, which is a division of DIR, was established in 1973 as a state-run program to enforce effective standards, assist employers to establish and maintain safe working conditions, and to provide information, research, education and training in occupational safety and health. It was the first in the nation to adopt an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) standard in 1991 and the first to adopt a heat illness prevention regulation in 2005, followed by high-heat regulations for some industries, including agriculture, construction, landscaping, and oil and gas extraction, in 2010.

This innovation is part of Cal/OSHA’s ongoing effort to identify workplace hazards before they result in trauma and loss.

“Cal/OSHA is dedicated to preventing workplace injuries and illnesses through a multi-faceted approach that includes education, outreach, permitting, licensing, consultation services, and development of new occupational health and safety standards, as well as strong, clear, and consistent enforcement,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum.

Cal/OSHA has initiated other significant safety programs. The heat illness prevention campaign ["Water. Rest. Shade. – The work can't get done without them."](#) has increased employer awareness and compliance and significantly reduced outdoor-related illnesses and deaths since its introduction in 2010. Cal/OSHA’s Heat Illness Prevention [web](#)

[pages](#) include resources and updates on state-wide training sessions, as well as a guide to new requirements with additional safeguards starting May 1.

And three years ago, Cal/OSHA launched a state-wide Confined Space Initiative following the deaths of seven workers due to confined space hazards in various industries. The [website](#) has resources on confined space hazard prevention.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. Cal/OSHA's [Consultation Service](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Program.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may call the California Workers' Information Hotline at (866) 924-9757 for recorded information on a variety of work-related topics.

For media inquiries contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046.

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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](#). Non-media inquiries can contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.