

NEWS RELEASE

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DIR's tribute to fallen workers and commitment to workplace safety *Commemorating Workers' Memorial Day*

Oakland — The California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) honors the men and women of California who died or were injured on the job. On this [Workers' Memorial Day](#), DIR recommits itself to improving workplace safety.

Workers' Memorial Day takes place annually around the world, an international day of remembrance and action for workers killed, injured or made ill on the job. The observance is held each year on April 28, the day Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1970. Workers' Memorial Day is an opportunity to highlight the preventable nature of most workplace accidents and to promote campaigns in the fight for improvements in workplace safety and health.

"While we pause this day to remember those who died simply by trying to earn a living, we must honor their memories by continuing to make workplace safety a priority," said DIR Director Christine Baker. "We will focus our efforts and resources on identifying and targeting the most serious safety violators, and we will continue working closely with model employers who are making safety a part of their workplace culture."

"California workers deserve the opportunity to do an honest day's work and return home safely to their families," said Cal/OSHA Chief Ellen Widess. "Prevention is the key component to workplace safety and Cal/OSHA is committed to working with employers to make sure they are in full compliance of safety and health standards."

California has a long history of improving workplace safety and continues to lead the nation in protective safety standards:

- Cal/OSHA last year launched a statewide Confined Space Initiative after seven workers died in 2011 due to confined space hazards in various industries. This ongoing initiative includes outreach and enforcement to educate employers and workers about these hazards. Cal/OSHA issued a [Confined Space Hazard Alert](#) to help employers and employees identify confined space hazards and take immediate steps to train and protect workers and have emergency procedures on site. Cal/OSHA has also posted extensive resources on confined space hazard materials [online](#).
- Cal/OSHA was the first in the nation to adopt an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) standard in 1991, to ensure that all employers have effective safety and health programs tailored to their specific workplaces.

- Cal/OSHA was also the first in the nation to enact a standard and comprehensive program to prevent workers from suffering heat illness and death working in high heat outdoors. Cal/OSHA's program has been effective in preventing many heat-related illnesses and deaths to farmworkers, construction workers, landscapers, and others through enforcement, education and outreach, media and partnerships with business and labor organizations to educate employers and workers about the risks of heat illness and simple steps necessary to prevent illness and death. Cal/OSHA has posted extensive resources on heat illness prevention on its [website](#).

Cal/OSHA was established by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1973 to enforce effective standards, assist and encourage employers to maintain safe and healthful working conditions, and to provide for enforcement, research, information, education and training in the field of occupational safety and health.

Additional information about Cal/OSHA including workers' rights and how employers can reduce workplace injuries is available [online](#) as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

For assistance from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Unit—a free service—employers can call (800) 963-9424.

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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