



## Labor Division

### May 2024 Newsletter

#### Recognize, Assess, Control

Recognized as the unofficial start of summer in the United States and Canada the last two weeks of May hold significant promise. In the United States the last weekend in May is the Memorial Day weekend, while in Canada a week before is the Victoria Day holiday weekend. These weekends even generate a bit of cross-border solidarity as people on both sides of the border make an entire week out of the back-to-back long weekends. People ramp up their outdoor activities with summer conditions and workers will be seen undertaking an ever-increasing amount of outdoor work and projects.

Through the lens of safety and health the increase in outdoor activities and work brings along hazards that we must recognize, assess and control. Along with fun and enjoyment, recreational pursuits on these weekends have a history of tragic outcomes. Motor vehicle accidents, boating accidents and accidental drownings, accidents and injuries associated with fireworks and quietly lurking will be episodes of skin damage resulting from sun exposure and possibly setting people up for skin cancer are but a few of such hazards.

Nothing comes without an element of risk, but the steps of recognizing, assessing and doing all that is possible to control the hazards is an excellent process whereby we can significantly mitigate the possibility of adverse outcomes and health effects. Not only as we begin summer, but on any day in any weather this process of recognize, assess and control will aid immensely in achieving positive outcomes in the context of safety and health.

Making itself felt more and more with each passing season, the impact of climate change must be considered/recognized and assessed. Losing control of change is a contributor to any occupational safety or health incident and in the context of climate change we see a moving target as there are seasonal changes and, has been witnessed across the states in the great plains and those adjacent states, these changes can be daily. Not that long ago severe weather of this nature was closely associated with the states in the great plans with only limited outbreaks beyond. This is no longer the case, and it will not likely ever be the case again. Residents/workers/employers in the states historically impacted have experience and as much as possible have systems in place to recognize, assess and establish controls. There is no control of the weather, but their experience puts controls in place that help to address the responses to this weather. States with less experience will have to adopt and adapt.

No stranger to the United States, wildfires have captured headlines across North America. Like extreme weather, wildfires have extended their impact and learning, adopting and adapting the "lessons learned" will be a requirement in controlling the hazards associated with wildfires as much as possible.

The Labor Division of the National Safety Council has and is always looking ahead to the next hazards to adversely impact workers. With that in mind, the Labor Division has provided division members with “state of the science” information on a vast variety of topics and is fully engaged on the dangers to safety and health of workers from climate change. The division is not limiting itself to this. The division is providing a profoundly deep cross section of information on occupational hazards and how to limit the danger to workers.

Coming this fall in Orlando the National Safety Council will hold its annual Congress and Expo. The Congress and Expo represents one of, if not the largest, safety and health event anywhere in the world. In the middle of this will be the fall Labor Division meetings. These meetings will not disappoint as we learn, network, celebrate and share information that will save lives, stop injuries and prevent illness in workplaces.

For the best and most current in safety and health this fall, the Congress and Expo and the Labor Division meetings are the places to be. Join in and be part of a division and organization that welcomes workers from unions across the United States and Canada.

[2024 NSC Safety Congress & Expo: Registration - 2024 NSC Safety Congress & Expo](#)

In Solidarity and Kindest Regards

Bob Stone, Chairperson, NSC Labor Division