



Labor Division

February 2026

January 2026 is already behind us and even Valentines Day is a memory. This tells me two things. Firstly, the year is moving very fast. Secondly, with the stellar work already done in getting ready for the Labor Division meetings in May, I know there is much to do to keep up with and to improve upon the very best standard of division meetings.

Labor Division meetings represent one of the best opportunities in North America to learn from each other and from subject matter experts on almost any subject in the context of safety and health. All divisions of the National Safety Council embrace the safety and health of workers, but worker safety and health is the foundation of the Labor Division. Without overstating it, workers and their union representation absolutely belong in the division and at division meetings in the spring and fall.

Thinking about maintaining the reputation of the division and ultimately raising the standards of the division and division meetings is where my mind as Labor Division Chairperson is going these days.

When something works well, what do I and the division leadership do? We do what we do well. We get working to ensure that all spring and fall meetings will provide every person attending with the information and methods to ensure safe and healthy workplaces. This heavy lifting is done throughout the year and has been done for years, so this is not new, but it is the expectation of ourselves, and we will settle for nothing less.

A Chairperson must look beyond the obvious. In other words, above and beyond what we do well and ask some difficult questions. This process got an experienced group of division and NSC people and I asked about how we function. Are we consistently performing as per rules and procedures?

I was fortunate to come across a quote in a video that is very useful as I and others began consideration of this question. The video was about inspecting workplaces for safety and health hazards. The quote goes "in inspections you will find situations or have findings of adverse conditions that are referred to as day to day but are not necessarily normal or as designed". This required a bit of thought, but this is a clear statement. It is said that a situation may have veered away from normal or as designed for so long that this deviation has become the typical day to day state.

The future of the Labor Division amid the COVID-19 pandemic was anything but assured. Leaders and motivated division members, along with NSC staff, found ways to not only have the division persevere, but to flourish and grow.

With some years elapsed since those pandemic days it became clear that our rules and procedures may not have kept pace. We had evolved into that space where a vast number of new faces had arrived in the division and a comprehensive review was needed to ensure we are true to the rules and procedures and that new people to the division are aware of the rules and procedures such that they can be fully present in the operation of the division, Further to this, that rules and procedures that require amending are changed and appropriately adopted.

Overseeing this work as Chairperson required a call to some of our longest standing and retired members. It is such a pleasure to speak with and receive the wisdom of these people. This process not only reinforces the decades of working to ensure safe and healthy workplaces, but it lays the cornerstone of advocacy on behalf of the safety and health of workers.

I want to put this in perspective. The May Spring meetings of the Labor Division are not that far away. We will meet at the Convention Centre in Baltimore. Registration will open in February of 2026 with meetings running from May 4th to 8th. We get started at 1 p.m. on Monday, May 4th. There will be full day meetings on the 5th & 6th for Labor Division attendees, with Expo and Keynote access on Thursday & Friday, May 7th & 8th.

As a chairperson and part of a team ensuring that the division operates as designed and that we evolve as necessary will not only assist in making the May meetings a huge success, but that future meeting and activities of the division will be successful and inclusive while being a powerful voice for worker safety and health.

The Labor Division is a passion of mine. In ensuring the best operation of the division I know that this division will be a passion for all those involved now and to come as build for a future of safe and healthy workplaces.

As chairperson of the Labor Division, it is a privilege to work with an executive committee that is second to none and members of the division that can proudly say that each day their efforts prevent injury, illness and death in the workplace. The Labor Division is the place to be and the spring meetings in Baltimore, Maryland are already being prepared.

Join us and amplify the leadership you already demonstrate.

In Solidarity and Kindest Regards,

Keith Pendergast, Chairperson, NSC Labor Division

2026 Labor Division Spring Meeting

The Baltimore Convention Center

Baltimore, MD

May 4-8, 2026

Save the Date



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