



The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

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Promoting productive workplaces
through safety and health research



eNews: Volume 21, Number 11 (March 2024)

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Volume 21, Number 11 (March 2024)

From the Director's Desk

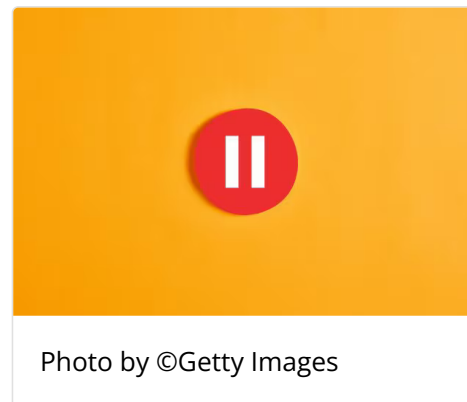
John Howard, M.D., Director, NIOSH

The Power of a Pause

Taking a pause can be a powerful thing. Hitting your personal pause button can help restore your energy and focus. A deliberate pause in a speech can help you emphasize important points and make your speech more impactful. A pause can also be used to emphasize the importance of worker safety and health.

During April 15–19, NIOSH, our partners, and others in the construction industry will pause to observe [National Work Zone Awareness Week](#). This collaborative effort aims to encourage safe driving through highway work zones. The event reminds drivers that they can protect workers and themselves by slowing down, avoiding distractions, and being alert when driving through work zones.

The construction industry also holds pauses like these for worker safety, which are often referred to as “safety stand-downs.” A safety stand-down may involve the entire worksite pausing their work to focus on one specific safety issue. Employers may also use a safety stand-down to address multiple hazards on their worksite. See these [suggestions](#) and [examples](#) to learn more about conducting a safety stand-down.



Many construction employers and workers will use “Work Zone Awareness Week” to participate in the [National Stand-Down to Prevent Struck-by Incidents](#) [☑](#). This stand-down focuses attention on work-related struck-by hazards and reinforces the importance of training and prevention.

NIOSH has resources promoting construction worker safety in work zones and from struck-by incidents. We recently released a fact sheet addressing work zone safety for [dump truck operators](#) [📄](#). The NIOSH Science Blog has also published information on preventing [struck-by incidents in lift zones](#) and [injuries and fatalities in foundation construction](#). In addition, the [NIOSH Center for Motor Vehicle Safety](#) provides research-based guidance to prevent work-related motor vehicle crashes. More resources from [NIOSH](#), [CPWR](#) [☑](#) (The Center for Construction Research and Training), and [OSHA](#) [☑](#) are also available.

Contractors, workers, and safety professionals across the nation are invited to pause and participate in these safety events. Doing so can improve safety for workers in the construction industry.

Research Rounds

Physical Job Demands in Pregnancy and Associated Musculoskeletal Health and Employment Outcomes

Study authors: Leslie A. MacDonald, NIOSH; Candice Y. Johnson, NIOSH, Duke University; Ming-Lun Lu, NIOSH; Albeliz Santiago-Colón, NIOSH; Gaelen P. Adam, Brown University School of Public Health; Hannah J. Kimmel, University of Michigan Medical School; Peter G. Napolitano, University of Washington; and Ian J. Saldanha, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Brown University School of Public Health

Why is this [study](#) important?

Pregnancy is a time of many obvious changes as well as less apparent ones, including changes to the structure and function of the muscles and bones (the musculoskeletal system). Studies show that mild musculoskeletal pain that resolves after pregnancy is common, and that severe persistent pain occurs in up to 20% of pregnancies.

We know that work-related physical demands like heavy lifting or prolonged standing and walking are associated with musculoskeletal disorders in workers. However, effects of these physical demands on pregnant workers are less clear. Pregnant workers with heavy physical demands can talk to their employer and doctor about their concerns. Please see the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website](#) [☑](#) for more information on pregnant workers’ rights and reasonable accommodations under the Pregnant Workers’ Fairness Act.

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Newsroom

Careers

How did you do the study?

In our review, we included studies published from 1990 to 2022. These studies included 142,320 pregnant and 1,744 post-pregnant workers from 16 studies in eight countries worldwide.

What did you find?

Our review found evidence that heavy lifting (22 pounds or more) and postural load (bending at the waist, work with hands over shoulders) were associated with greater risks of pelvic musculoskeletal pain that limits function and increased use of sick leave in pregnant workers. As lifting frequency increased, both risks greatly increased. Prolonged standing was associated with double the risk of sick leave. These findings suggest that pelvic musculoskeletal pain that limits function is a unique health condition associated with exposure to physical job demands during pregnancy.

What are the next steps?

Our review highlights the importance of designing work to reduce exposure to known physical hazards to prevent musculoskeletal injury and sustain the ability to work. Reducing exposure is especially important during pregnancy when injury may be more likely.

Workers' Compensation Costs for Occupational Hearing Loss Claims in the United States, 2009–2013

NIOSH study authors: Elizabeth A. Masterson, Steven J. Wurzelbacher, P. Timothy Bushnell, and Chih-Yu Tseng

Why is this [study](#) important?

About 23% of U.S. workers in workplaces with potentially damaging noise levels have hearing difficulty. Hearing loss is known to decrease quality of life by complicating communication and can cause stress, fatigue, and symptoms of depression. The impact of hearing loss is also expensive. Yet, hearing loss caused or worsened by workplace exposures, or [occupational hearing loss \(OHL\)](#), is preventable with [hearing loss prevention programs](#). This study provides more accurate and reliable estimates for annual U.S. workers' compensation costs and the number of claims for OHL.

How did you do the study?

We used 12,708 workers' compensation claims for OHL during 2009–2013 from 37 states and the District of Columbia. To understand the extent nationwide, we estimated the number of claims and associated costs for the 13 missing states and for workers in self-insured companies. With this information, we estimated the average number of yearly claims. We also estimated the associated costs and identified the jobs with the most claims.

What did you find?

The costs associated with OHL claims averaged \$60 million per year in 2013 dollars, ranging from \$49 to \$67 million. The average annual number

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[What's this?](#)

of claims was 4,965 (range: 4,114 to 5,986). However, these numbers greatly underestimate the “true” number of OHL cases. Most workplace hearing loss goes uncompensated by the workers’ compensation system in the United States.

We found nearly half of the industry/occupation groups with at least 50 OHL claims were in manufacturing. The highest number of claims occurred in these groups:

- Aviation (all other employees and drivers)–922 claims
- Coal Mining (not otherwise classified)–715 claims
- Coal Mining (surface and drivers)–347 claims

What are the next steps?

It is critical for health and safety specialists, employers, and workers to work together to prevent OHL through effective hearing loss prevention programs.

Highlights

Special Issue Focuses on Health Worker Mental Health

NIOSH and the *American Journal of Public Health* published a special issue highlighting the mental health crisis among healthcare workers. The issue, titled [Health Worker Mental Health: From the Current Crisis to a Sustainable Future](#), explores challenges facing health workers. It offers critical research findings that aim to support concrete solutions.

NIOSH Announces New Division Director

CAPT Lisa Delaney, MS, CIH, has been appointed the Division Director of the World Trade Center Health Program. CAPT Delaney joined the NIOSH Office of the Director in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Office (EPRO) in 2006. She became EPRO Deputy Director in 2010 and EPRO Associate Director in 2013. CAPT Delaney received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Spanish from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. She has a Master of Science degree in Environmental and Industrial Hygiene from the University of Cincinnati. In 2004, she became a Certified Industrial Hygienist. Congratulations CAPT Delaney!

NIOSH Congratulates: NIOSH Engineer Named Federal Engineer of the Year!

CAPT Stephen Martin received the 2024 Federal Engineer of the Year Award, presented by the National Society of Professional Engineers. This award is the only one of its kind given to outstanding engineers in the federal government. Twenty-six others received awards for contributions to their federal agencies. Read the [press release](#) to learn more.

NIOSH and University of Cincinnati Renew Partnership Agreement

NIOSH and the [University of Cincinnati](#) announced the renewal of their longstanding Memorandum of Understanding. The renewal signifies the two groups will continue to work together on mutually beneficial research, service, and professional training endeavors. For more information about the partnership, contact [Kathleen Goedel](#).



NSPE President, Bill Atkinson presents CAPT Martin with his award. Image courtesy of NSPE and Christie's Photographic Solutions




Monthly Features

Meetings and Events

In March, NIOSH is hosting two Webinars in the series on [Best Practices for clinical care in the World Trade Center Health Program](#).

- March 14, 12- 1 pm (ET) and is titled "Diagnosis and treatment of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)." The webinar will be given by Dr. Rafael de la Hoz from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai [Register here](#) [↗](#).
- March 21, 12- 1 pm (ET) and is titled "Managing depression and suicide risk." The webinar will be presented by Dr. Sandra M. Lowe who is Medical Director of the World Trade Center Mental Health Program at the Mount Sinai

Clinical Center of Excellence at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai [Register here](#)  .

View more occupational safety and health-related *conferences, meetings, webinars, and events* hosted by NIOSH and partners.

Communication Products

FACE Reports

- [Carpenter Dies After Fall From 6-Foot Ladder—Kentucky](#)
- [Roofer in Boom Lift Electrocuted by Overhead Electrical Line—Kentucky](#)

Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program Report

- [47-Year-Old Captain Suffers Fatal Heart Attack at Fire Station—California](#)
 - [38-Year-Old Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Dies During SCBA Confidence Training at Fire Academy—California](#)
-

Science Blog

[Sign up](#) to receive updates about new NIOSH Science Blogs delivered directly to your inbox! Here are the blogs from last month:

- [NIOSH Global Collaborations on Workplace Safety of Nanomaterials](#)
 - [Prevention Through Design to Address Continuing Construction Workplace Deaths and Injuries](#)
 - [Finding the Right Fit—Is Your Respirator “The One”?](#)
 - [AJPB Highlights Health Worker Mental Health](#)
 - [Protecting the Well-being of the Nation’s Health Workforce](#)
-




NORA

Services NORA Council: Emergency Preparedness and Service Workers Webinar

Join the Services NORA Council for a joint webinar with the NIOSH Emergency Preparedness and Response Program, March 19 at 1 p.m. (ET). They will discuss safety and health issues for service workers involved in emergency response activities. Contact [Lauren Menger-Ogle](#) for more information.

News from Our Partners

Funding Available for Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services

A CDC funding [National Partnerships Cooperative Agreement Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) is now available. Funding applications are due April 1. There will be informational webinars on [March 5](#)  and [March 6](#)  . Additional information is also available at [Grants.gov](#)  or by emailing [The National Partners CoAg](#).

New eBook Helps Employers Address Airborne Infectious Diseases

The American Industrial Hygiene Association's eBook, "Healthier Workplaces and Schools," is available for free on their [Commit to C.A.R.E.](#) webpage. You can read or download an [English](#) and [Spanish](#) version. The eBook could help employers address the risks of airborne infectious diseases in workplace settings.



New Tools Available From New Hampshire Occupational Health Surveillance Program

The New Hampshire Occupational Health Surveillance Program added two [dashboards](#) to its data portal: demographic and industry profiles. This expands on the Bureau of Labor Statistic's [Geographic Profiles](#) by including disability status in their analysis. The dashboard allows users to view measures like labor force participation rate, unemployment rate, average duration of unemployment, and poverty rate in the United States.

Free Webinar on Warehousing and Ergonomics

OSHA and the American Staffing Association are hosting a free [webinar](#) on March 7 from 2:00–3:30 p.m. (ET). Presenters will highlight two recent [OSHA Temporary Worker Initiative Bulletins](#) titled *Warehousing Industry Employment* ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) and *Ergonomics for the Prevention Of Musculoskeletal Disorders* ([English](#), [Spanish](#)).

In Memoriam: Dr. Stephen Reynolds

NIOSH is saddened to learn about the passing of Dr. Stephen "Steve" Reynolds. Dr. Reynolds was a Professor in the Department of Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences at Colorado State University. He also held a faculty position in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health of the Colorado School of Public Health. Dr. Reynolds was a national leader in industrial hygiene and occupational health, focused on agricultural workers. He served as Director of the High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety from 2001 to 2023. He was also the Co-Founder and Deputy Director of the Mountains and Plains Education and Research Center from 2015 to 2022.

Updates from State FACE Programs

- **Clerk Shot in Robbery of Family Gas Station in Washington State:** The [Fatality Narrative](#) from the Washington FACE program is about a gas station clerk who was fatally injured during a robbery. The report gives a summary of the incident, legal requirements, prevention recommendations, and available resources. The report can be also be reviewed as a [slideshow](#).
- **Preventing Fatalities in the Tree Care Industry From Falling Limbs:** This [Hazard Safety Alert](#) from the Massachusetts FACE program highlights the occupational health risks for the tree care industry. It uses a case study of a worker fatality to offer recommendations to prevent similar incidents.

Federal Register Notice

Meeting of the Board of Scientific Counselors, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

The [notice](#) was posted on February 5. The meeting will be held on March 13 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (ET).

Newsroom

Careers

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Source: [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#)