



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

CONSEJO NACIONAL DE SALUD Y SEGURIDAD OCUPACIONAL



Telling Our Stories A Guide to Preparing Statewide and Regional Workers' Memorial Week Reports

What is Workers' Memorial Week (WMW)?

In 1970, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act, promising every worker the right to a safe job. Workers, Unions and activists have fought hard to make that promise a reality. But our work is far from over.

For many years, workers, families and activists have observed April 28 – the date the OSH Act went into effect – as Workers' Memorial Day. The event is an opportunity to remember those who have suffered and died on the job and to renew the fight for safe workplaces.

With growing interest around the country from workers, families, COSH groups, workers' centers and labor unions, a single day of observation has grown into an entire week of activities before, during and after April 28th. We now refer to this annual commemoration as Workers' Memorial Week (WMW).

Effective tools for Workers' Memorial Week include issuing a report, a press release, guest editorials or other media advisories calling attention to the numbers of workers killed on the job in the last several years.

Why Prepare a WMW Report?

- Inform the public, government, and employers about the prevalence of worker injuries and fatalities. This will help empower workers to exercise their rights and taking action, hold employers accountable, and reinforce demands that government agencies enforce the laws and protect workers.
- Your organization may use a WMW report to win greater public support for improving worker health and safety. It's also a tool to advocate for greater responsiveness from government agencies, hold employers accountable, and bring greater visibility to the issue of worker injuries and fatalities.

Some Tips on Producing a Good Report:

- The report should resonate not just with your core supporters and networks, but also tell a story that the general public will understand, and motivate new leaders to take a stance against preventable worker injuries and fatalities.
- Use common terms, spell out every acronym, and keep language generally accessible to people who are not familiar with all the issues.
- Include real stories of workers who have been injured or have died at work. The stories put a face to the statistics and can make a compelling argument of why change is needed urgently.
- Structure your report so that each component makes sense on its own and also contributes to the overall story you are telling. Subheadings are an effective tool to break documents into manageable and meaningful sections.
- A picture is indeed worth a thousand words, or a thousand data points. Photos, graphs, charts and infographics can be extremely effective in expressing key results or illustrating a presentation.
- Clearly state your recommendations for change, policy preference, and/or call to action. Say what should be done about the problem, and clearly and persuasively explain why this is THE best option (or options.)

Steps to Writing a WMW Report:

1. Go to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) website to get the latest number of occupational fatalities. CFOI data is presented for each state. The data is the latest estimate for the number of traumatic occupational fatalities in the state for a year. Since estimates for occupational illness are ten times the number of recorded fatalities, this is a conservative estimate for all fatalities.

There is a huge gap every year between what some state agencies report publicly as the number of fatalities as compared to what eventually comes out in CFOI data. (Typically not included as "program-related" fatalities by state agencies, for example, are many transportation deaths, homicides, and injuries to the self-employed.) This can be used to make the point that many more workers die on the job every year than what some state agencies report to the public.

2. Gather information on cases from the following sources. The information and stories behind the numbers of occupational fatalities are an important piece in getting attention to the issue.

- National COSH, Worker Fatality Database. This list has victims' names, employers and short descriptions, where available, of the incident that resulted in a fatality. These details can be vital information to piece together the story behind the data. We encourage groups to go beyond recent cases; fatalities from an earlier time

- period may also highlight an important issue or create an opportunity to include families and/or other constituents. <http://www.coshnetwork.org/fatality-database>
- AFL-CIO, “Death on the Job.” This annual report is a rich resource for data and comparisons of programs. <https://aflcio.org/about-us/conferences-and-events/workers-memorial-day#recent-death-on-the-job-reports> (This resource is in English).
 - OSHA: Reports of Worker Fatalities. This page on OSHA’s website lists fatalities and incidents which resulted in hospitalizations of three or more workers, as reported to OSHA and states with OSHA-approved State Plans. Searchable by fiscal year, as well as weekly reports. Employers are required to report incidents affecting covered workers within eight hours. www.osha.gov/dep/fatcat/dep_fatcat.html (This resource is in English).
 - NIOSH has lists of all the fatality reports they have done or state partners that they support at www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/facecont.html. Some state reports may not be posted there. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/default.html> (This resource is in English).

Fatalities in Specific Industries

- **Construction:** The Falls Campaign (developed by the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) and partners) maps both construction fatalities and separately all construction fall fatalities. Although cases are listed without names, there are links to newspaper accounts that have worker information (and sometimes photos) listed: <https://stopconstructionfalls.com/fatality-map/> (This resource is in English).
- **Mining:** The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has fatality data available on its website. The agency compiles annual summaries of workers who die in mining occupations. There were fatalities in coal mines in 2016 and 16 in metal or non-metal mines. Four workers have died so far in 2017. MSHA posts information on each fatal injury case on its website, including the name and age of the victim. That information is normally posted three to five days after the incident occurs. Main page: <https://www.msha.gov/data-reports/fatality-reports/search> (This resource is in English).

Public Safety:

- **Firefighter** fatalities, with names of victims and descriptions of investigation reports are available from the U.S. Fire Administration. <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/>

- **Law Enforcement** related fatalities, also with names of victims and descriptions of investigation reports are available from the Officer Down Memorial Project.
www.odmp.org/

State resources: In states with their own OSHA program (not federal OSHA) there is specific information on how the State Plan was reviewed by Federal OSHA – known as the Federal Annual Monitoring and Evaluation (FAME) Report. These reports and other information about state plan programs are at www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html.

- State Plan Data. Most State Plans have lists that contain some information about fatalities that occurred under their jurisdiction. Most often, one has to request this information from the state agency charged with enforcing health and safety regulations. Some State Plans, such as Washington State, organize a Workers' Memorial Week event to memorialize these tragedies.
- State fatality reports and related publications from a number of states are listed at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/default.html> (This resource is in English).

3. Start developing issues, themes and stories from data, numbers, and cases you have gathered. Start with an outline describing the sections of the draft report, filling in as much information as you can under the various categories. Collect photos, newspaper clippings or other graphics that may be helpful in the report.

4. Do outreach to potential partners to develop relationships and a plan of action. Contact family members of deceased workers as well as activist organizations that are natural allies in the fight for worker rights for safe and healthy workplaces. These might include:

- Worker rights activists, such as Jobs With Justice (JWJ)
- Labor unions in the area and the Central Labor Councils
- Family members who have lost loved ones in workplace tragedies. United Support and Memorial for Workplace Fatalities (www.USMWF.org) is an excellent resource
- Injured workers
- Labor studies programs
- Other advocacy groups that work for environmental or social justice issues
- Worker centers and their national offices, such as Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ).

5. Start drafting the report, including a timeline for issuing the report, media advisories, press releases, and events to highlight your findings.

WMW Draft Outline:

- **Title:** This should be short and draw attention to the report.
- **Summary:** Major findings and key issues presented.
- **Listing of Known Victims' Names** with short description if possible.
- **Case Studies/Stories:** Drive home some of the stories behind the numbers that illustrate the “key issues.”
- **Findings:** This is the presentation of the facts and figures to illustrate the problems related to worker health and safety.
- **Recommendations and Call to Action:** These should be as detailed as possible with clear ways that agencies and employers can improve conditions and reduce hazards.
- **Appendices:** For more detailed numbers, charts or other presentations of relevant information.
- **Media Plan** for getting the findings of the report out to the target audience. Note that some groups plan education programs as a follow-up to Workers' Memorial Day Reports and activities so this information could be included in the report.