



WisCon Words of Wisdom

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February Awareness Topics

February 1-7: [National Burn Awareness Week](#)

All Month Long:
[American Heart Month](#)

The Neutral Advantage

Is your workstation working against you?

Slouching or reaching can put unnecessary stress on your joints, leading to fatigue and "tech neck." Be mindful of how you sit, aim for neutral posture. Try the following tips:

- Keep your elbows, hips, and knees at 90-degree angles.
- Position your monitor so the top third of the screen is at eye level—no more looking down!
- Keep your wrists straight and floating, not resting on hard edges while typing.
- If your feet don't reach the floor, try using a footrest to take the pressure off your lower back.

We want to hear from you!

What content would you like to see in an upcoming newsletter?

Let us know [here](#).

February is American Heart Month

February is a time to raise awareness and implement heart-healthy changes in your workplace. According to the CDC, work-related factors contribute to 10–20% of all cardiovascular disease deaths among the working-age population. Risk factors include physically demanding roles, chemical exposures, long hours, noise, and chronic stress. Research from New Zealand further highlights that plant operators, assemblers, professional drivers, and food service workers face the highest risks.

The impact is significant: in 2023, the CDC found that over 22% of deaths among production employees were due to heart disease. Fortunately, workplace programs can make a difference. Consider implementing health screenings, surveying staff to identify physical or psychosocial stressors, and building short activity breaks into the day. Providing healthy food options in vending machines and cafeterias, and ensuring chemical safety training are also vital steps. The **NIOSH Total Worker Health® Program** is an excellent resource for integrating these safety and health protections.

Prevention is the goal, but preparation is essential. OSHA reports approximately 10,000 workplace cardiac arrests annually in the U.S. An American Heart Association study found that 55% of employees lack access to CPR/AED training, and half cannot locate an AED at their workplace. Because immediate CPR can **triple** a victim's chance of survival, these gaps are critical. This February, take a moment to evaluate your safety options and help make your workplace a heart-healthy environment.

Protect Your Extremities From The Cold

When temperatures drop, "bundling up" is about more than just staying warm—it's about preventing serious injuries like frostbite and hypothermia.

Your body protects its core first, so blood flow is reduced to the hands, feet, ears, and face. That's why these areas get cold fastest and are most at risk for frostbite.

- Head & Face: Wear a knit hat, balaclava, or liner under your hard hat. Heat loss depends on exposed skin, wind, and moisture.
- Hands: Use insulated gloves. For fine work, wear thin liners under heavier gloves so skin isn't exposed.
- Feet: Wear insulated, waterproof boots. Use one thick sock or a liner plus wool sock. Too many socks can restrict circulation and make feet colder.

OSHA Extends 2024 Hazard Communication Standard Compliance Deadlines

On January 15, 2026, OSHA officially extended the compliance deadlines for the 2024 Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) updates by four months. This decision was made to provide the agency time to publish necessary guidance materials and allow industry time to review them before the new provisions take effect.

All previously established deadlines have been shifted forward by four months.

Requirement Phase	Original Deadline	New Deadline
Substance Evaluation (Manufacturers, Importers, Distributors)	January 19, 2026	May 19, 2026
Workplace Compliance — Substances (Labels, Programs, Training)	July 20, 2026	November 20, 2026
Mixture Evaluation (Manufacturers, Importers, Distributors)	July 19, 2027	November 19, 2027
Workplace Compliance — Mixtures (Full Alignment)	January 19, 2028	May 19, 2028

During this extended transition period, facilities have flexibility in how they maintain their programs:

- You may comply with the previous HCS version (2012).
- You may comply with the updated HCS version (2024).
- You may use a combination of both standards as we phase out older labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS).

While this extension provides "breathing room," companies should still continue to:

1. Coordinate with Suppliers to ensure that you are receiving updated SDSs as they become available.
2. Audit Training Materials by reviewing current employee training modules against the new 2024 requirements to identify gaps.
3. Monitor the OSHA website for additional guidance. It is likely that OSHA may provide additional guidance regarding the revised provisions.

As information becomes available, we will continue to share what we learn.

Are Your Holiday Lights Still Up? It's Time to Take Them Down.

We get it—it's cold outside, and decorations bring us joy. However, "temporary" lighting is not designed to withstand the elements for months on end. If your December decorations that you brought out in November are still hanging, you could be looking at a safety hazard and OSHA violation. Most decorative lights are rated for temporary use only (usually considered a maximum of 90 days).

If you have outdoor holiday lights, the fluctuating winter weather, wind, and ice can degrade the cord insulation. Animals such as squirrels can also help that along by chewing on the wires.

As you take your décor down, inspect for and discard damaged cord sets. It would also be a good idea to let the lights dry completely indoors before storing them away for use later this year to prevent potential mold growth.

If employees are using ladders to remove hung lights, be mindful of ladder placement. It's very icy throughout most of the state. Ensure that ladders are on a stable, clear surface and that employees are reminded to maintain three points of contact.

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