



WisCon Words of Wisdom

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May Awareness Topics

May 4-8: [National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction](#)

May 10-16: [National Police Week](#)

May 17-23: [National EMS Week](#)

All Month Log:

[Healthy Vision Month](#)

[Better Hearing and Speech Month](#)

[Mental Health Month](#)

[Building Safety Month](#)

Walking-Working Surfaces Proposed Rule

Last month, OSHA published a [proposed rule](#) in the Federal Register regarding the Duty to have fall protection and falling object protection standard (1910.28). The proposal would remove the current deadline for fixed ladders extending more than 24 feet to be equipped with personal fall arrest or ladder safety systems.

OSHA is accepting comments and hearing requests through June 5, 2026. Submissions should be made electronically via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at [regulations.gov](#), identified by Docket No. OSHA-2025-0072.

We want to hear from you!

What content would you like to see in an upcoming newsletter? Let us know [here](#).

Updated OSHA Heat NEP

On April 10, 2026, OSHA announced an update to the National Emphasis Program (NEP) for Outdoor and Indoor Heat-Related Hazards, which is now in effect for the next five years. This update refines OSHA's inspection and outreach strategy, using data collected between 2022 and 2025.

Here are the key changes that you should be aware of:

- **Data-Driven Focus:** The program now targets 55 high-risk industries, identified using the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics data and OSHA citation history.
- **Operational Adjustments:**
 - Fixed numerical inspection goals have been removed, with a greater focus on high-impact enforcement.
 - New, reorganized guidelines will help assess your heat-related safety programs and provide clearer citation advice.
 - Improved tracking and oversight processes will help ensure the program is more efficient and effective.
- **Inspection Triggers:** Compliance officers will continue to carry out random inspections in high-risk industries when heat advisories or warnings are issued by the National Weather Service. Inspections may also be expanded on "heat priority days" if heat hazards are identified.

The overarching goal is to prevent heat-related injuries and fatalities, with OSHA emphasizing the importance of "Water, Rest, and Shade" in both indoor and outdoor work environments.

For more details, you can refer to OSHA's new release or read the updated NEP.

If you have any questions about heat-related safety or would like to schedule a consultation, feel free to reach out to WisCon. We're here to help!

2026 National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction

Next week (May 4-8) is the 13th annual National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction. Consider holding a stand-down to focus on fall hazards and reinforcing the importance of fall prevention.

The following are also free webinars you could attend:

- [Kick-Off the 2026 Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction](#)
- [Prevention Through Design: Ask the Expert Webinar](#)
- [Top Three Things to Know About Working on Roofs](#)

Gemba Walks: Observe, Ask, Respect

In the world of workplace safety and operational excellence, it's easy to become buried in spreadsheets, lab results, and compliance reports. These data points are essential—but they only tell part of the story. To fully understand how work happens—and where risks actually emerge—we need to pair data with direct observation. That means going to the Gemba.

Derived from a Japanese term meaning “the actual place,” Gemba refers to where value is created—whether that's a production floor, a lab, a job site, or even a service environment. A Gemba Walk is the practice of leaders stepping out from behind their desks to observe work as it actually happens.

It isn't about checking boxes or catching people doing something wrong. At its best, it's about observation, curiosity, and respect.

Seeing Beyond the Checklist

It's easy to confuse a Gemba Walk with a standard safety audit, but the two serve different—though sometimes complementary—purposes.

An audit is typically a formal verification of rules: a structured way to confirm that standards and procedures are being followed. It asks, “Are we compliant?”

A Gemba Walk, by contrast, asks a different question: “Does this process actually work in practice?”

Rather than focusing solely on compliance, a Gemba Walk explores how procedures interact with real-world conditions. For example, a worker might not be using certain PPE—not out of disregard, but because it's difficult to access, interferes with visibility, or slows a critical task. These kinds of insights often don't surface through checklists alone.

In many organizations, the line between audits and Gemba Walks may blur, with some approaches combining structured verifica-

tion and open-ended inquiry. Still, the intent matters: a Gemba Walk is primarily about learning, not judging.

The Core Principles of an Effective Walk

While there's no single official formula, effective Gemba Walks are often grounded in three core lean principles:

- **Go See** – You can't fully understand a process from a screen. Being physically present allows you to observe workflow, environmental conditions, and the small adjustments people make to get the job done.
- **Ask Why** – Use techniques like the Five Whys to explore what's beneath the surface. The goal is not to assign blame, but to understand root causes—why a bottleneck exists, why a workaround developed, or why a risk persists.
- **Respect the People** – The people doing the work are the subject-matter experts. A Gemba Walk is an opportunity to listen, learn, and build trust. When employees see leaders engaging with their day-to-day reality, it strengthens both safety culture and communication.

Turning Observation into Action

The most important part of a Gemba Walk happens after you leave the floor. Observation without follow-up is just a walk.

Insights gathered at the Gemba should be paired with data and worked through collaboratively with the team. This is where organizations can identify waste (Muda), uncover near-miss hazards, and improve processes in ways that are both practical and sustainable.

Data tells you *what* is happening. The Gemba helps you understand *why*. When used together, they provide a more complete picture than either could alone.

Five Things to Know About Extension Cords

Below are five basic electrical safety practices related to extension cord use:

1. Use factory-assembled cord sets. They provide quality assurance and manufacturing standards to keep workers safe.
2. Use only extension cords that are 3-wire type. Extension cords must be grounded and permit grounding of any tools or equipment connected to them.
3. Use only extension cords that are marked with a designation code for hard or extra-hard usage. Examples of these codes include S, ST, STW, and STO.
4. Use only cords, connected devices, and fittings that are equipped with strain relief and remove cords from receptacles by pulling on the plug, not the cord. Flexible cords should connect to devices and to fittings in ways that prevent tension at joints and terminal screws.
5. Continually inspect cords on-site. Any cords that are damaged, modified, or not marked for hard/extra-hard use need to be removed from service immediately.

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