



WisCon Words of Wisdom

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September Awareness Topics

September 18: [Concussion Awareness Day](#)

September 20-26: [National Child Passenger Safety Week](#)

All Month Long:

[National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery](#)

[National Preparedness](#)

[National Food Safety Education](#)

Warehousing NEP Reissued

OSHA has reissued its [National Emphasis Program \(NEP\)](#) to identify and reduce or eliminate hazards when inspecting warehousing and distribution center operations, mail/postal processing and distribution centers, and parcel delivery/courier services covered by the NEP. Inspections under the NEP will focus on workplace hazards common to the industries including, but not limited to, powered industrial vehicle operations, material handling/storage, walking-working surfaces, means of egress, heat, ergonomics, and fire protection. The revised NEP became effective July 31, 2026, and will be in place for five years.

For more information, please visit [osha.gov/warehousing](https://www.osha.gov/warehousing).

We want to hear from you!

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

National Preparedness Month: Is Your Workplace Ready?

September is National Preparedness Month, sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It serves as an annual reminder that natural and man-made disasters can happen anytime and anywhere, including at work. In 2023, **75,104 weather-related events resulted in 877 deaths and 3,857 injuries** in the United States. Heat, wildfires, and tornadoes were responsible for the most weather-related deaths that year, according to the National Safety Council's *Injury Facts*.

Employers can improve preparedness by identifying emergencies most likely to affect their workplace, such as severe weather, fires, hazardous material releases, power outages, medical emergencies, or workplace violence. Review the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) to ensure it includes procedures for reporting emergencies, evacuation and shelter-in-place, employee accountability, emergency contacts, first aid, shutdown procedures, and employee responsibilities. Plans should also address visitors, contractors, and employees who may need additional assistance.

Communication is another critical component. Because emergencies may disrupt electricity, cell service, or internet access, employers should consider backup methods such as two-way radios, battery-powered radios, public address systems, emergency notification systems, and designated emergency contacts. Conduct drills or tabletop exercises and use the results to identify and correct gaps in your response.

National Preparedness Month is an excellent opportunity to review workplace hazards, update your EAP, check emergency equipment and supplies, communicate expectations, and practice your response.

Preparedness Resources: [FEMA/Ready.gov](https://www.fema.gov/ready) – [National Preparedness Month](#) | [OSHA – Emergency Preparedness and Response](#) | [National Safety Council – Emergency Preparedness](#) | [National Weather Service](#)

Compressed Air Safety

Compressed air is a staple in many workplaces, although its high energy and pressure create significant safety hazards if handled improperly. To prevent injuries ranging from impact with flying debris to catastrophic air embolisms, OSHA enforces 29 CFR 1910.242(b) and other standards.

Compressed air used for cleaning must either be reduced to less than 30 psi (pounds per square inch) or equipped with safety nozzles, pressure-reducing regulators or engineered dead-end systems. These controls ensure that static pressure does not exceed 30 psi if the tip becomes blocked, as this could otherwise cause significant tissue damage and even death.

In addition to reducing air flow, operators may also need to use chip guarding (such as screens, barriers, or specialized air cones) and/or wear appropriate PPE to protect against ricocheting debris and noise.

Understanding and implementing these requirements are vital for maintaining a safe work environment.

Controlling Crystalline Silica in Stone Finishing

If your team manufactures, fabricates, finishes, or installs natural or engineered stone countertops, protecting workers from respirable crystalline silica exposure should be a top priority. Tasks such as cutting, grinding, edging, polishing, and shaping stone can create fine silica dust that workers can breathe deep into their lungs.

Over time, exposure to respirable crystalline silica can lead to serious health problems, including silicosis, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and kidney disease. The good news is that these risks can be significantly reduced with the right controls and safe work practices.

One of the most effective ways to reduce silica dust is to use wet cutting methods whenever possible instead of dry cutting. Applying water at the point where the tool meets the stone helps keep dust from becoming airborne. Equipment such as wet-edge milling machines, water spraying systems, and other wetting methods can make a big difference in reducing exposure.

Local exhaust ventilation is another important safeguard. By capturing silica dust at or near the source, these systems help prevent workers from breathing it in. In many cases, combining wet methods with local exhaust ventilation provides the best protection.

Every jobsite and fabrication shop are different, so employers should evaluate their operations and choose the dust control methods that best protect their employees while complying with OSHA's respirable crystalline silica standard.

Finally, don't overlook the importance of training. Workers should understand the hazards of silica dust, know how to properly use dust control equipment, and consistently follow safe work practices. A well-informed workforce is one of the strongest defenses against unnecessary exposure.

Taking a proactive approach to silica dust control helps create a safer workplace and protects workers' health for years to come. For additional guidance and resources, visit OSHA's [Respirable Crystalline Silica Safety and Health Topics](#) webpage.

Sling Inspections Are a Small Step That Prevents Big Accidents

Slings are essential tools for lifting and moving materials, but a damaged sling can fail suddenly and cause serious injuries, property damage, or a dropped load. That's why every sling should be inspected before use.

Before lifting, take a moment to inspect the entire sling. Look for cuts, tears, excessive wear, broken wires, kinks, crushing, corrosion, heat damage, chemical damage, damaged fittings, and missing or unreadable identification tags. Pay close attention to hooks, eyes, stitching, links, and connection points.

Make sure the sling is the correct type and size for the load and that its rated capacity is adequate for the intended lift. Inspect any protective sleeves, edge guards, hooks, shackles, or other hardware being used with the sling. Slings should also be protected from sharp edges, excessive heat, chemicals, and other conditions that could cause damage.

Never use a sling if you are unsure of its condition or rated capacity. Remove damaged slings from service immediately and follow your company's procedures and the manufacturer's instructions for tagging, evaluation, repair, or disposal. Never tie knots in slings or exceed their rated capacity.

Before making a lift, ensure the load is properly balanced and secured. Keep employees clear of suspended loads and never position yourself underneath a load being lifted. Avoid sudden starts, stops, or shock loading, which can place excessive forces on the sling.

Remember the following: Inspect before you lift. Protect slings from sharp edges. Know the load weight. Know the sling's capacity. Keep people away from suspended loads.

A few minutes of inspection can prevent a serious accident. When in doubt, take it out of service.

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