



WisCon Words of Wisdom

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October Awareness Topics

October 4-10: [Fire Prevention Week](#)

October 10: [World Mental Health Day](#)

October 19-23: [National School Bus Safety Week](#)

All Month Long:

[National Crime Prevention Month](#)

[National Protect Your Hearing Month](#)

Prioritizing Mental Health and Well-Being

As the seasons shift and end-of-year pressures begin to build, October offers a timely reminder to prioritize mental health and wellness in the workplace. Shorter daylight hours, along with growing professional and personal demands, can contribute to increased stress and fatigue. Taking time to check in regularly with team members can make a significant difference in catching early signs of burnout. By encouraging open communication, promoting work-life balance, and reminding your team about available resources, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), you can help foster a resilient workplace where employees feel supported through every season.

We want to hear from you!

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

Farm Equipment on Roadways

In addition to roadway construction and school bus traffic, it is also the time of year when you may see agricultural equipment on the roadways. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) refers to tractors, trailers and other vehicles that are used for agricultural work as Implements of Husbandry (IoH) and Agricultural Commercial Vehicles (Ag CMVs).

WisDOT has lighting and marking requirements for all categories of IoH. For starters, a slow-moving vehicle emblem must be mounted on the rear of the vehicle at all times. This emblem is not required on towed units if the power unit's emblem is visible from the rear. During hours of darkness, lighting and marking requirements are in place for the specific type of IoH. Detailed information on these requirements can be found at: [Wisconsin Department of Transportation Agricultural vehicle safety](#).

It is important to understand that while on the road, IoH and Ag CMVs operate differently than motor vehicles in that they move at slower speeds and weigh a lot more, as in tons more. A lot of farm equipment moves at speeds of 25 mph, regardless of the posted speed limit. In terms of weight, a typical tractor pulling two 300-bushel gravity flow wagons can easily weigh 20 to 30 tons compared to a car which is typically 1-2 tons. (see: [Time to upgrade our thinking on highway risk before its too late](#)). These and other factors contribute to the unfortunate statistic that roadway deaths account for 15-30% of Wisconsin farm workplace fatalities. (see: [Lighting and Marking.pdf | Powered by Box](#))

Another difference to note is that Federal Highway regulations require flashing amber lights and turn signals on farm machinery manufactured after June of 2017. This means that a lot of equipment on the roadways may not have flashing lights or turn signals. Since operators of pre 2017 IoH or AgCMVs may not have a visual means of alerting you to their presence or signaling that they are turning, you should take extra caution if you decide to pass them.

Additional farm safety resources can be found at: [Farm Management, Division of Extension, UW-Madison – Safety and Health](#).

Protecting What You Hear

October is National Protect Your Hearing Month, putting a spotlight on a critical workplace health issue. Research shows that roughly 22 million U.S. workers face hazardous noise annually, and 13 million work around ototoxic (hearing-damaging) chemicals. Because occupational exposures contribute to 1 in 4 cases of adult hearing loss, proactive prevention is essential.

Know the Limits & Risks OSHA sets an Action Level (AL) of 85 dBA and a Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) of 90 dBA (averaged over 8 hours), though damage can occur even lower. Beyond straining communication, untreated hearing loss is linked to tinnitus, high blood pressure, and increased safety hazards. (Continues on Page 2)

OSHA's Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Standards

During the National Safety Council's Safety Congress & Expo in September, OSHA released their preliminary top most frequently cited standards for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2026. The top 10 cited standards include:

1. Duty to have fall protection – Construction ([1926.501](#)): 4,041 violations
2. Hazard Communication ([1910.1200](#)): 1,961
3. The control of hazardous energy (Lockout/Tagout) – General Industry ([1910.147](#)): 1,863
4. Scaffolds, General requirements ([1926.451](#)): 1,725
5. Ladders – Construction ([1926.1053](#)): 1,659
6. Respiratory Protection ([1910.134](#)): 1,608
7. Powered Industrial Trucks – General Industry ([1910.178](#)): 1,379
8. Fall Protection, Training Requirements – Construction ([1926.503](#)): 1,273
9. Eye and Face Protection – Construction ([1926.102](#)): 1,120
10. General requirements for all machines – General Industry ([1910.212](#)): 1,072

Comparing this list to the top 10 cited standards in FFY 25, the standards ranked 1, 2, 9, and 10 remain unchanged. Those ranked 3 through 8 were also present in the top 10, but shifted in order. The final, official list of the top 10 cited standards is historically released by mid-spring.

While this list covers the most cited standards across all industries, you can view data specific to your sector by searching your North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code on OSHA's [Frequently Cited OSHA Standards](#) webpage.

Protecting What You Hear (continued)

Quick Signs of Hearing Loss

- Struggling to hear in noisy settings.
- Feeling like others are constantly mumbling.
- Frequently asking people to repeat themselves.

Action Steps for Prevention Occupational hearing loss is largely preventable. Keep your workplace safe by:

1. Measuring workplace noise levels.
2. Implementing engineering and administrative noise controls.
3. Maintaining a robust hearing conservation program.
4. Enforcing proper use of NIOSH-approved hearing protection.

Need expert guidance? WisCon offers free noise monitoring services, hearing conservation program reviews, and practical recommendations on noise reduction controls.

Let this October be a reminder to safeguard your team's hearing!

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