



Weekly Safety Meeting

Suicide Prevention in the Construction Industry

We don't often think of mental health as a workplace safety issue, but it is. When workers are struggling, it impacts their health and safety. It may be surprising that the construction industry has one of the highest occupational rates of suicide in the United States. In this industry, in particular, work-related stress has been proven to affect mental well-being, leading to anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and even suicide. The good news is that help is only a phone call away—the toll-free number is 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. There are also several organizations in place to help before it is too late.

Employers' Role

The US Department of Labor and OSHA are raising suicide awareness and working with industry leaders to help employers reach out to employees regarding mental health care. The “Zero Suicide Initiative” is a tool used by many private and public sector organizations. Employers can look into how to become one of the participating organizations.

Employers should encourage an attitude of workplace safety and health—including mental health. This means noticing red flags and asking if an employee is okay, then having a plan in place to connect workers with mental health resources right away. Employers can start learning about how to set the tone, observe, and act on warning signs by visiting OSHA's document “Employer's Role in Preventing Suicides” on OSHA's Suicide Prevention website: <https://www.osha.gov/preventingsuicides>

Risk Factors and Signs

Risk factors are the underlying conditions in a person's life that put them at risk. These include health issues (mental/physical), environmental exposures (drugs/family problems/access to guns), and the individual's personal history (past neglect/abuse/suicide attempts).

There are many indicators of suicidality, or suicide ideation. Most obviously, these include someone saying that they are going to hurt or kill themselves. All mentions of self-harm should be taken seriously and addressed immediately. Other warning signs include change in behavior (aggression/isolation/fatigue) or mood (depression/irritability/anger).

Mental Health Crisis Lines:

If you are in crisis, there are options available to help you cope. For confidential support 24/7 in the United States, don't hesitate to reach out via phone or chat.

- English:
 - Call 988 or
 - Chat at 988lifeline.org/chat
- Spanish:
 - Call 1-888-628-9454

Changes in behavior, mood, or talking about self-harm can be a cry for help. It takes courage to intervene and not laugh off or ignore what may seem like an employee's personal problems. Companies should be proactive in addressing mental health issues and see it as part of an employees' overall health and safety policy and have resources in place for individuals in crisis. An employee's issues may be deeper than a few comments or off behaviors, and turning a blind eye only leads to trouble.

SHOW COMPASSION...TAKE ACTION!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

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