

How to Promote This Year's National Safety Stand-Down

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, falls account for more than 30% of workplace fatalities in the construction industry. In an effort to raise awareness of this recurring hazard and help construction employers keep their staff safe, the National Safety Stand-down was created.

This annual event—which is sponsored by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)—was initially scheduled for May 4-8, but was postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The event will now take place next month, from Sept. 14-18.

The purpose of this event is to reinforce the importance of fall prevention by encouraging construction employers to host safety talks, conduct equipment inspections, develop rescue plans and discuss job-specific hazards. Anyone interested in educating employees on falls or other workplace hazards can participate free of charge. In past years, participants included general contractors, subcontractors, trade associations and governmental agencies.

Organizations do not need to register to participate. All they need to do is hold a stand-down event of their choosing. They can then download a certificate of participation from the National Safety Stand-down [website](#) and submit any feedback they have on their event to OSHA.

To hold a successful stand-down event, consider the following tips:

- Designate a coordinator to organize the stand-down. If you have multiple worksites, identify the individuals who will lead the stand-down at each site.
- Ask all of the subcontractors, owners, architects and engineers associated with your projects to participate in the stand-down.
- Review your existing fall-prevention strategies and consider the:
 - Types of falls (e.g., falls from ladders, roofs or scaffolds) that impact your business
 - Ways you could improve your program
 - Forms of training you provide to your employees and potential gaps in safety protocols
 - Kinds of fall-prevention equipment you use
- Develop presentations or activities that will meet your needs. Decide what information will be best for your workplace and employees. The meeting should provide information to employees about hazards, protective methods and the company's safety policies, goals and expectations.
- Decide when to hold the stand-down and how long it will last. Decide whether the stand-down will take place over a break or lunch period.
- Promote the stand-down. Try to make the event interesting to employees to improve attendance. Some employers find that serving snacks increases participation.

Above all, it's important to follow up on any insights you gained from holding a stand-down. This could involve updating your fall prevention program or providing more training.

For additional industry-specific risk management guidance, contact us today.