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Press Release

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April 28 is Worker Memorial Day

JUNEAU, Alaska—National Workers' Memorial Day on Saturday, April 28 recognizes workers who died or sustained work-related injuries or illnesses during the previous year.

"Worker Memorial Day provides an opportunity to remember and honor those who lost their lives on the job," said Grey Mitchell, director of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Labor Standard and Safety Division. "The majority of these accidents are preventable and we can bring some meaning to the tragedy by committing to understand the causes and taking action to avoid future occurrences. Success requires organizational as well as individual commitment."

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 was effective on April 28. That year, the annual workplace fatality rate was 18 deaths for every 100,000 workers. More than 40 years later, the rate has been reduced to about three deaths for every 100,000 workers.

According to the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries program conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4,547 fatal work injuries were recorded in the U.S. in 2010, about the same as the final count of 4,551 in 2009. This is 3.5 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers.

The preliminary data show fatal work injuries in Alaska increased from 17 in 2009 to 39 in 2010. In 2008, 33 workers died while on the job.

Labor Standards and Safety's Consultation and Training Section can help evaluate the hazards and minimize the chances of a fatality at Alaska's worksites. For information, call 1-800-656-4972. To report circumstances where a worker's life may be in danger, contact the AKOSH Enforcement Section Hotline at 1-800-770-4940.

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Alaska Labor Standards and Safety
labor.alaska.gov/lss/

Occupational Safety and Health (AKOSH)
labor.alaska.gov/lss/oshhome.htm

Voluntary Protection Program
labor.alaska.gov/lss/vpp.htm

Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program
labor.alaska.gov/lss/OSH-SHARP.htm

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Workplace Fatality Data
bls.gov/iif/oshwc/foi/cfch0009.pdf