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Commissioner

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Press Release

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April 28 is Worker Memorial Day

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

"In recent weeks, the lives lost in the Washington Tesoro refinery blast, West Virginia mine and Gulf of Mexico oil rig are reminders that we need to remain vigilant about workplace safety," Labor Commissioner Click Bishop said. "These accidents are devastating to the families, co-workers and businesses involved."

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2008 there were 5,214 workplace fatalities nationwide – 33 of those in Alaska.

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.

"We all have a responsibility to understand what causes accidents and make changes to bring some meaning to these tragic events," Commissioner Bishop said. "Through the focused, coordinated and sustained efforts of state and federal agencies, employers and all Alaska workers, our goal of zero lives lost can become a reality."

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. Almost 40 years later, the rate has been cut to four deaths for every 100,000 workers. With more than 140 million workers nationwide, the reduction equates to about 19,600 fewer on-the-job deaths each year.

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Alaska Labor Standards and Safety
<http://labor.alaska.gov/lss/>

Occupational Safety and Health (AKOSH)
<http://labor.alaska.gov/lss/oshhome.htm>

Voluntary Protection Program
<http://labor.alaska.gov/lss/vpp.htm>

Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program
<http://labor.state.ak.us/lss/OSH-SHARP.htm>