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Commissioner

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Press Release

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April 28 is Worker Memorial Day; Alaska Workplace Fatalities Down 48%

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

"Fatal work injuries in Alaska were down 48 percent in 2009 to 17, from 33 in 2008," Labor Commissioner Click Bishop said. "But even one fatality is devastating to the families, co-workers and businesses involved."

The preliminary data show that nationwide fatal injuries were also down in 2009 to 4,340 from 5,214 in 2008, a 17 percent decrease.

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. More than 40 years later, the rate has been reduced to about three deaths for every 100,000 workers. More fatal work injuries resulted from transportation incidents than from any other event. Highway incidents alone accounted for one out of every five fatal work injuries in 2009.

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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.alaska.gov/lss/osh-sharp.htm>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Workplace Fatality Data

<http://stats.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/foi/cfch0008.pdf>