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Press Release

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Commissioner Drygas, Mayor Berkowitz Commemorate Workers Memorial Day *Event honors workers who lost their lives on the job*

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—Alaska Labor Commissioner Heidi Drygas and Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz will participate in a Workers Memorial Day ceremony at noon Thursday, April 28 at the Alaska Fallen Firefighter Memorial. Preliminary data indicate approximately 27 Alaskans lost their lives on the job in 2015, and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has cracked down on employers whose willful misconduct has led to the death of employees.

“We will not rest until every Alaskan has a safe workplace,” said Commissioner Heidi Drygas.

WHO: Commissioner Drygas, Mayor Berkowitz, Alaskan workers

WHAT: Workers Memorial Day event

WHERE: Alaska Fallen Firefighters Memorial, 100 E 4th Ave. (next to Fire Station 1)

WHEN: Noon, April 28, 2016

The majority of workplace fatalities occur in Alaska's transportation sector but other industries such as construction and logging experience high rates of workplace fatalities. Alaska Occupational Safety and Health conducted investigations into three workplace fatalities in 2015, which occurred at a [construction site](#), in a warehouse with heavy equipment, and at an assisted living facility. Two out of the three cases involved alleged willful misconduct by the employer, and the department issued maximum fines allowed by state law.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development also works proactively with employers on voluntary consultation programs to improve workplace safety. Employers can receive free workplace consultation visits and training from the Alaska Occupational Safety and Health staff. These programs have led to dramatic reductions in injuries in high-risk occupations like seafood processing. The state and Municipality of Anchorage collaborate to improve workplace safety and are expanding oversight of assisted living facilities, which have grown rapidly with Alaska's aging population.

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