

# Safety Lines

## Avoiding the dangers of summer heat, humidity

Every year, dozens of workers die and thousands more become ill while working in extreme heat or humid conditions. There are a range of heat illnesses and they can affect anyone, regardless of age or physical condition. Heat-related illness can affect workers in many industries, at indoor or outdoor worksites. Some job-related risk factors include:

- working outdoors in warm weather;
- heat sources, such as ovens, fires or hot tar;
- strenuous physical activity; and
- heavy or non-breathable work clothes.

### Know the signs, take action

It's important to know the signs of heat-related illness; acting quickly can prevent more serious medical conditions and may even save lives.

- **Heat stroke** is the most serious heat-related illness and requires immediate medical attention. Symptoms include confusion, slurred speech, fainting, seizures, very high body temperature, and skin that's hot and dry or profusely sweating. Call 911 if a coworker shows signs of heat stroke.
- **Heat exhaustion** is also a serious illness. Symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, thirst and heavy sweating.
- **Heat cramps** are less serious but are still signs of too much heat exposure. Symptoms include muscle spasms or pain.

If you or a coworker have symptoms of heat-related illness, tell your supervisor right away. If you can, move the person to a shaded or cooler area, loosen their clothing, give them water (a little at a time) and cool them down with ice packs or cool water.

### Heat-related-illness prevention programs

Under OSHA law, employers are responsible for providing workplaces free of known safety hazards. This includes protecting workers from extreme heat. An employer with workers exposed to high temperatures should establish a complete heat-related-illness prevention program.

- Provide workers with water, rest and shade.
- Allow new or returning workers to gradually increase workloads and take more frequent breaks as they build a tolerance for working in the heat – acclimatization.
- Plan for emergencies and train workers about prevention.
- Monitor workers for signs of illness.

As with all safety and health hazard prevention programs, the hierarchy of controls dictates



engineering controls be used first to reduce employee exposure to heat. The OSHA Technical Manual outlines elements of an effective heat-related-illness prevention program at [www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm\\_iii/otm\\_iii\\_4.html](http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_iii/otm_iii_4.html). The following suggested controls are taken from the OSHA Technical Manual.

**Possible engineering controls may include:**

- using air conditioning;
- increasing general ventilation;
- providing cooling fans;
- running local exhaust ventilation where heat is produced (such as laundry vents);
- using reflective shields to block radiant heat;
- insulating hot surfaces (such as furnace walls);
- stopping leaking steam; and
- providing shade for outdoor worksites.

If engineering controls are not feasible or are not effective in reducing employee exposures, administrative controls are another way to protect employees.

**Possible administrative controls may include:**

- acclimatizing workers, starting on the first day of working in the heat;
- re-acclimatizing workers after extended absences;
- scheduling work earlier or later in the day;
- using work/rest schedules and providing water;
- limiting strenuous work (such as carrying heavy loads); and
- using relief workers when needed.

When engineering and administrative controls are not enough, personal protective equipment (PPE) is a way to provide supplemental protection.

**Possible supplemental protection may include:**

- fire proximity suits;
- water-cooled garments;
- air-cooled garments;
- cooling vests;
- wetted over-garments;
- sun hats;
- light-colored clothing; and
- sunscreen.

An effective heat-related-illness prevention program should include a worker acclimatization program, heat alert program and medical monitoring program. It should also establish an effective training program that includes how to recognize heat-related illness symptoms and what to do when there is a heat-related illness emergency. OSHA recognizes it may not always be feasible to implement all elements in all workplaces; however, implementing as many elements as possible will make the program as effective as possible.

The OSHA has many heat-related resources available on its webpage “Overview: Working in Outdoor and Indoor Heat Environments” at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress), explaining what employers can do to keep workers safe and what workers need to know, including factors for heat illness, adapting to working in indoor and outdoor heat, protecting workers, recognizing symptoms and first-aid training.



# MNOSHA adapts, responds, reaches out during busy COVID-19 time

As was true for every organization, many changes occurred for Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance and MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation (WSC) from March through June. Like many others businesses and organizations, MNOSHA began practicing social distancing by shutting down its offices and having staff members work remotely or telework. However, that does not mean MNOSHA has been sitting on the sidelines.

## MNOSHA Compliance

During this time, MNOSHA Compliance conducted 353 inspections, including the following: 107 complaints; 13 fatalities; eight follow-ups; and 16 serious injuries.

MNOSHA Compliance received 5,867 email and phone inquiries, almost three times greater than last year during the same period. The inquiries included 719 complaints, an approximate 50% increase, of which 391 were related to COVID-19 and resulted in 48 on-site inspections being conducted. MNOSHA Compliance is issuing general-duty citations, Minnesota Statutes § 182.653, subdivision 2, to employers that are not following provisions of the COVID-19 Preparedness Plans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

There were also 616 nonformal complaints processed during this time. In these cases, a letter is sent to the employer requiring it to provide written response addressing the hazards noted in the letter within two days of receipt.

MNOSHA Compliance also created a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan template and instructions for employers to use in developing their own preparedness plan. This template can be used by all industries to aid in reducing the spread of COVID-19. In addition, COVID-19 health and safety guidelines for the meatpacking industry were developed. These documents, along with additional related information, are available in several languages at [www.dli.mn.gov/updates](http://www.dli.mn.gov/updates).

MNOSHA Compliance conducted 31 outreach events, with 4,507 participants, which is double the number of attendees for the same time period in 2019. MNOSHA Compliance participated in a variety of virtual events. Three webinars were hosted with the Minnesota Department of Health, long-term-care employers and their employees. Another webinar was with Somali workers in Greater Minnesota, with MNOSHA Compliance staff members explaining the inspection process, the complaint-handling process, CDC guidelines and worker rights, plus answering audience questions. The goals of the webinar were that employees understood their rights, knew how to file an anonymous complaint with MNOSHA Compliance and had someone who could explain these items to them in Somali. MNOSHA Compliance also hosted several webinars with Latino workers in Minnesota. Again, staff members explained the inspection process, complaint-handling process, CDC guidelines and worker rights, and answered audience questions in Spanish. A staff member was also interviewed by the Spanish WUMN Univision Café Libre program.

## MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation

MNOSHA Workplace Safety Consultation staff members were also teleworking and focused their attention on responding to calls from the public and creating guidance to help businesses prepare for and protect workers from COVID-19.

Initially, MNOSHA WSC created guidance information handouts for construction, convenience stores, manufacturing and public-sector administration. Additional handouts were then created for essential industries, manufacturing industries and, specifically, meatpacking industries. As some businesses were allowed to re-open, MNOSHA WSC created specific guidance information for bait shops, dental offices and golf courses.

To ensure a more consistent message was communicated to stakeholders, two MNOSHA WSC consultants were assigned to a guidance development team, in cooperation with MDH and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to create guidance for various noncritical-sector and, later, critical-sector businesses listed on the StaySafe MN website at [staysafe.mn.gov](http://staysafe.mn.gov).



To provide additional guidance and clarification about requirements for the construction industry, MNOSHA WSC recently presented four two-hour webinars about COVID-19 Preparedness Plans for construction worksites attended by a total of 715 stakeholders.

During this time, the MNOSHA WSC Safety Grant Program continued to operate and continues to accept and approve applications for safety grants on two-month cycles. Additionally, MNOSHA WSC resumed scheduling its free on-site consultation visits with employers. Several consultations were initially done as virtual visits, using online video chat platforms, with the majority conducted as typical on-site visits.

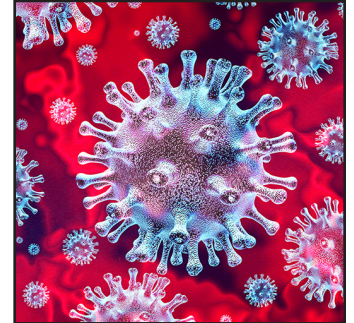
MNOSHA WSC conducted 170 visits from March through June – 126 initial, 29 training and 15 follow-up – during which 639 hazards were identified. During the same time period in 2019, it conducted 390 visits – 310 initial, 42 training and 38 follow-up – during which 1,645 hazards were identified.

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## COVID-19 and recordkeeping

- Federal OSHA: [Revised enforcement guidance about recording cases of coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance follows federal OSHA recordkeeping guidance, which is used across the country and needs to be consistent for national data comparison, with the exception that in Minnesota, low-hazard industries are also required to record injuries and illnesses.



MNOSHA Compliance will enforce the recordkeeping requirements of 29 CFR Part 1904 for all employers with employee COVID-19 illnesses. Recording a COVID-19 illness does not, of itself, mean the employer has violated any OSHA standard. And, pursuant to existing regulations, employers with 10 or fewer employees have no recording obligations unless they have been notified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics; they need only report work-related COVID-19 illnesses that result in a fatality and report any employee's in-patient hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye.

More information about COVID-19 is available from [federal OSHA](#) and from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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## Reviewing the basics: *Recordkeeping training in September, October*

Maintaining an accurate OSHA log of recordable work-related injuries and illnesses is an important skill that benefits employers, workers, safety professionals and government agencies. The Department of Labor and Industry is offering free, introductory-level, online training sessions about OSHA recordkeeping. **Registration is required.**

### Webinar dates, times

- **Sept. 25 and Oct. 2** – 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

### Topics

- Recordability of injuries and illnesses
- Differences between OSHA cases and workers' compensation claims
- Classifying cases
- Counting time
- Privacy cases
- How many logs to keep
- Maintaining logs
- Creating a log summary
- Reporting log data to OSHA
- Recording COVID-19 cases

### Registration, more information

To register, visit <https://secure.doli.state.mn.us/events>. For more information about the training sessions, visit [www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard).

# MNOSHA Compliance signs safety, health partnerships

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance recently signed two Level 3 Cooperative Compliance Partnerships with on two projects. Level 3 is the peak level of MNOSHA Compliance partnerships, with applicants striving to be an industry leader with very comprehensive safety and health programs. Both partnerships were with **Veit**, for its: Canal Park Shoreline project in Duluth, Minnesota, scheduled for completion May 1, 2021; and Split Rock Lighthouse Campground project in Two Harbors, Minnesota, scheduled for completion Nov. 1, 2020.

The partnerships were signed under the agreement between the Minnesota Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors (MN ABC) and MNOSHA Compliance and under the Construction Health and Safety Excellence (CHASE) Minnesota – between Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Minnesota and MNOSHA Compliance. Complete information about MNOSHA's Cooperative Compliance Partnerships is online at [www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-partnership-programs](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-partnership-programs).



Veit • Canal Park Shoreline • Duluth, Minnesota



Veit • Split Rock Lighthouse Campground • Two Harbors, Minnesota

## Results of audit by federal OSHA available online

The results from the annual audit by federal OSHA are now available. The federal report, Fiscal-year 2019 Comprehensive Federal Annual Monitoring Evaluation (FAME) Report, including Department of Labor and Industry Commissioner Nancy Leppink's response, is available at [www.osha.gov/stateplans/famereport](http://www.osha.gov/stateplans/famereport).

## Construction Seminar, Sept. 22: Cranes in construction

Cranes are common on many construction sites in a variety of sizes and capacities. There are significant safety issues to be considered for the operators, the riggers and signal persons, the jobsite supervisors and managers, and the other trade partners in proximity to the diverse devices.

Attend this Construction Seminar, Tuesday, Sept. 22, at 7 a.m., for an update about the crane standard for construction in Minnesota. Learn what common crane hazards are often found on construction sites and how to eliminate them through best practices.

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance's free Construction Seminars feature a presentation about a specific construction safety or health topic, plus an update from MNOSHA Compliance about what's currently happening regarding investigations.

Visit [www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars) for complete information.



### 2020/2021 dates announced

The Construction Seminar 2020/2021 dates have been announced. Topics for the November, January, March and May sessions are being determined. All dates are Tuesdays and the program starts at 7 a.m.

#### Dates

- 2020: Nov. 17
- 2021: Jan. 19; March 16; and May 18

#### Location

For now, the September and November seminars will be done virtually, using an online meeting program, with the hope of returning to in-person meetings in the new year at the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Training and Conference Center in Shoreview, Minnesota. Stay tuned for details.

## Recognize Safe + Sound Week, Aug. 10 through 16

Safe + Sound Week, Aug. 10 through 16, is an annual nationwide federal OSHA event that recognizes the successes of workplace health and safety programs and offers information and ideas about how to keep America's workers safe. All organizations looking for an opportunity to recognize their commitment to safety are welcome to participate. Last year, more than 3,300 businesses helped to raise awareness about workers' health and safety.



Learn more about Safe + Sound Week and how to participate at [www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek](http://www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek).

## Recent trends in meat processing case rates

By Brian Zaidman, Research and Statistics

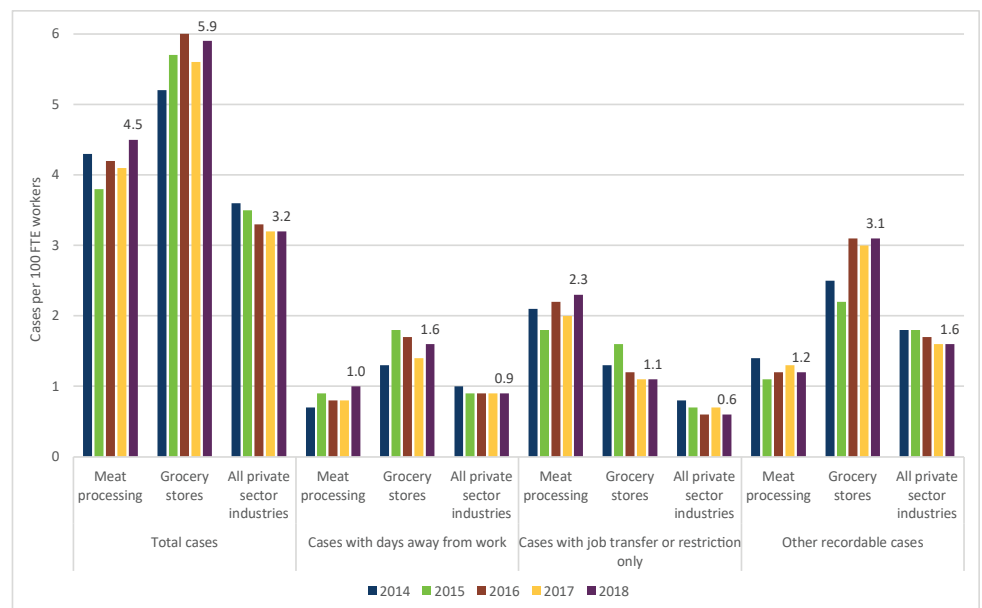
The meat processing industry in Minnesota – formally named animal slaughtering and processing, and including all NAICS codes starting with 3116 – operates throughout the state and the largest plants are significant employment centers in Greater Minnesota. This industry includes animal (except poultry) slaughtering, meat processed from carcasses, rendering and meat by-product processing, and poultry processing. Statistics from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages identifies 117 establishments in 2019, down from 125 establishments in 2014. Employment in this industry grew from 15,900 in 2014 to 17,300 in 2018 and dropped slightly to 17,000 in 2019.

Figure 1 shows the estimated numbers of OSHA-recordable injury and illness cases, from the annual Survey of Injuries and Illnesses, for meat processing, grocery stores and all private-sector establishments. Total case rates for meat processing have remained consistently between 4.0 and 4.5 cases per 100 full-time-equivalent (FTE) workers. Job transfer or restriction cases account for about half of all the meat processing cases. Cases with one or more days away from work (with or without any job restriction or transfer) are the least common case type.

In comparison, workers at grocery stores suffer many more injuries and illnesses, with total case rates between 5.0 and 5.9 per 100 FTE workers. “Other recordable cases,” which do not involve any days away from work, job transfer or job restriction, are the most common type among grocery store workers and have rates double those in meat processing. Grocery store workers also have higher rates of cases with one or more days away from work.

Comparing injury and illness rates in meat processing with the rates for all privately owned establishments shows that while the total case rates in meat processing are higher than for all private establishments, this is due to much higher rates of job transfer or restriction cases. For meat processing, the estimated rates for cases with days away from work and for other recordable cases are equal to or lower than the rates for all private establishments.

**Estimated OSHA recordable case rates per 100 full-time equivalent workers**



The relatively low rate of meat processing cases with one or more days away from work might signal issues with an undercount of OSHA-recordable cases. One way to quickly check recordkeeping case validity is to compare the estimated number of cases with days away from work with the number of workers’ compensation indemnity claims. While these two measures are rarely equal because of differences in requirements for OSHA log recordkeeping and workers’ compensation compensability, the case counts are often similar. Workers’ compensation indemnity claims almost always have more than three days away from work, while the OSHA log days-away cases need to have only one day away. Examination of workers’ compensation claims shows that while the total number of indemnity claims is greater than the estimated number of cases with days away from work for 2014 through 2017, a comparison with only claims receiving temporary total disability benefits shows the numbers are very similar. This indicates that simple errors in recordkeeping are not responsible for any possible undercount. The comparison shows that claims paid through settlement agreements are unlikely to be recorded on OSHA logs; OSHA gives employers discretion to decide on the work-relatedness of contested cases. Also, this comparison does not take into account the possibility that some worker injuries and illnesses are not being recorded in either system.

## Department thanks employers for participating in injury, illness survey



The Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) is finishing the collection of 2019 OSHA log information for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) annual Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. DLI regularly receives BLS surveys from more than 85% of the collectible establishments. The collection activities will be completed by mid-July. Employers still have time to act if they have been notified their 2019 data is due for collection by BLS and have not yet submitted their OSHA log data.

The survey team in DLI's Research and Statistics unit is continuing to code the injured worker and injury characteristics for cases with one or more days away from work. After editing and review by BLS, the injury and case count estimates and case rates, along with the worker and injury characteristics, are expected to be published in November. The 2018 estimates may be reviewed at [www.dli.mn.gov/our-areas-service/research-and-statistics/survey-occupational-injuries-and-illnesses](http://www.dli.mn.gov/our-areas-service/research-and-statistics/survey-occupational-injuries-and-illnesses).

DLI thanks Minnesota's employers for taking the time to complete the survey during this very different year. The information helps us to improve our programs to serve you better.

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## Free on-site safety and health consultations available

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Workplace Safety Consultation offers free consultation services, where employers can find out about potential hazards at their worksites, improve safety management systems and apply for grants to abate safety standards.

The program targets small, high-hazard businesses. It is separate from Minnesota OSHA Compliance inspection activities and no citations are issued as part of a consultation visit.



### Learn more and request a consultation

Web: [www.dli.mn.gov](http://www.dli.mn.gov) • Email: [osha.consultation@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.consultation@state.mn.us) • Phone: 651-284-5060

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## MNOSHA fatality, serious-injury investigations summaries online

Each month, Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) Compliance publishes current, updated summaries of its fatality investigations and serious-injury investigations.

For the federal-fiscal-year that began Oct. 1, 2019, MNOSHA Compliance has investigated 16 workplace fatalities through June 26.

The information provided about each investigation is: the inspection number, date of incident and worksite city; the type of business and number of employees; a description of the event; and the outcome of the MNOSHA Compliance investigation. The summaries, plus other helpful workplace safety and health information from MNOSHA, are available at [www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-resources-all-industries](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-resources-all-industries).



# Minnesota OSHA's calendar of events\*

## August 2020

- Aug. 7** *Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Council*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-advisory-council](http://www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-advisory-council)
- Aug. 10-16** *Safe + Sound Week*  
[www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek](http://www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek)

## September 2020

- Sept. 11** *Occupational Safety and Health Review Board*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-review-board](http://www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-review-board)
- Sept. 14-18** *National Safety Stand-down to Prevent Falls in Construction*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-falls](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-falls)
- Sept. 22** *Construction Seminar – Cranes in construction*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars)
- Sept. 25** *OSHA recordkeeping training – in person*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard)

## October 2020

- Oct. 2** *OSHA recordkeeping training – online only*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-recordkeeping-standard)

## November 2020

- Nov. 13** *Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Council*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-advisory-council](http://www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-advisory-council)
- Nov. 17** *Construction Seminar – Topic to be determined*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-construction-seminars)

## December 2020

- Dec. 4** *Occupational Safety and Health Review Board*  
[www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-review-board](http://www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/boards-and-councils/occupational-safety-and-health-review-board)

***\*All dates subject to change.***

See more at [www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/about-dli/events-minnesota-osha](http://www.dli.mn.gov/about-department/about-dli/events-minnesota-osha)