

THE SAFETY NET

CSEA

UNIONISM ON THE RISE: BUILDING POWER THROUGH SAFETY & HEALTH

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022
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SAFETY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

OSHA, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention form alliance to promote workplace mental health, suicide prevention awareness

U.S. Department of Labor | September 7, 2022 Trade Release

“WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA] and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) signed an alliance agreement on Sept. 7, 2022, to promote workplace mental health and suicide prevention awareness.”

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOL/bulletins/32bbb60>

U.S. Department of Labor awards \$1.9 million to 14 organizations nationwide to provide workplace safety, health training; recognize infectious diseases

U.S. Department of Labor | September 8, 2022 News Release

“WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor today awarded approximately \$1.9 million in grants to 14 nonprofits nationwide to fund education and training programs to help workers and employers recognize infectious disease hazards – including coronavirus – and identify preventive measures for a safe workplace.”

OSH TERM OF THE MONTH

Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH):

An atmospheric concentration of any toxic, corrosive or asphyxiant substance that poses an immediate threat to life or would cause irreversible or delayed adverse health effects or would interfere with an individual’s ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. - OSHA.gov

DID YOU KNOW?

That U.S. approval of unions is at an all-time high?

- **71% OF AMERICANS NOW APPROVE OF LABOR UNIONS** – Gallup Poll, Aug. 30, 2022
- **60 MILLION NON-UNION WORKERS IN THE U.S. SAY THEY WOULD JOIN A UNION IF GIVEN THE CHANCE.** – Department of Labor

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Do you have co-workers who might want to subscribe?

Share this newsletter with them and have them scan this QR code to subscribe.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help Rebuild CSEA’s Safety Network!

Download or print this newsletter in bulletin format to post in your workplace: cseany.org/safetynet

Get Featured in the Safety Net

Share your content by responding to the Safety Net Reader’s Response, “Member Spotlight”, or “Dear Bernie” newsletter column sections and get featured in the following edition!

**All participants will receive a prize!*

Submissions can be emailed to bernadette.foley@cseainc.org.

“DEAR BERNIE” ADVICE COLUMN

Dear Bernie,

Our office recently switched over to new LED lighting. While energy efficiency is a good thing, the lights seem to be too bright and are causing issues for myself and some co-workers, including headaches and eye strain. We talked to our supervisor, and they said our building is leased and it’s up to the owner of the building to fix the problem. What can we do?

-Concerned Safety Advocate

Dear Concerned Advocate,

From what you described, the lighting levels do not appear to be at an actionable level with the New York State Public Employees Safety and Health Bureau (PESH) based on the applicable general industry standards. If the intensity of the light is directly causing physical harm or is creating a greater hazard, you should contact your OSH Specialist for consultation immediately.

Often, the best course of action is to first report the problem to management and for local leadership to discuss the impact in a labor-management meeting. It is best to be prepared in advance of that meeting and be ready to discuss, in specific detail, who is affected and how that affects their ability to complete their essential job functions in a safe and productive manner. It’s also a good idea to come prepared to share a potential solution, if possible. In this case, I suspect a simple dimmer switch may be an inexpensive and quick solution to your problem. Contact your OSH Specialist for advice and assistance in preparation for your meeting with management.

-Bernie

Write to “Dear Bernie” with your questions or concerns relating to workplace safety and health and receive advice from our OSH professionals!

**Submissions will be published anonymously.*

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Share your story, photo, meme, or even a shout-out to readers to potentially feature in the Safety Net Newsletter!

→ SEE PAGE 2 FOR MORE! ←

LONG COVID AND THE LABOR FORCE

COVID continues to take a major toll on our economy, specifically on the labor market. Workers nationwide are out of work due to long COVID. Many workers risked their lives every day to do their job during the pandemic, despite few to no safety protections from their employers. Recent studies have assessed this impact and the findings are staggering:

- June 2022 Census Bureau study & Brookings Metro report found:
 - 16 million working age Americans (18-65 years of age) have long COVID.
 - Of this number, 2-4 million people are out of work due to long COVID.
 - The annual cost of these lost wages alone is around \$170 billion per year (and potentially as high as \$230 billion).

Although these statistics are devastating, there lies a silver lining. Over the last year, employees of some of the largest companies in the country have unionized, in many cases, organizing around safety and health issues.

WORKERS COMPENSATION ILLNESS CLAIMS

Time is Running Out!

Time may be running out for members to file a workers' compensation claim if they were potentially exposed to COVID-19 at work. **State law requires that these claims be filed within two years of diagnosis.** There are no out-of-pocket costs for workers' compensation claims. Protect your right to file a claim by contacting a workers' compensation attorney today!

CSEA endorses the law firm of Fine, Olin and Anderman. Get started now by visiting www.foalaw.com/csea-members/

MEMBER RESOURCES

OSHA Suicide Prevention Infographics

Suicide Prevention:
<https://tinyurl.com/OSH-Suicide-Prevention>

Prevención del suicidio:
<https://tinyurl.com/OSH-Prevencion-del-suicidio>

Publication Print Orders

Order occupational safety & health publications for your workplace and we will print & ship them for free!

Submit an order for any materials linked in the Safety Net newsletters or listed on our webpage at www.cseany.org/safety-resources by emailing bernadette.foley@cseainc.org

Materials & Trainings

View/download our A-Z list of fact sheets: cseany.org/safety-resources

CSEA Occupational Safety & Health trainings: cseany.org/member-resources

CSEA Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) Specialists

CSEA OSH Specialists can provide training, technical assistance, labor-management services, and even help establish a safety and health committee in your workplace.

Contact your OSH Specialist: cseany.org/member-support

TRANSITIONING INTO HEATING SEASON

The time is quickly approaching when commercial buildings will be converting their ventilation systems from cooling season to heating season. Unlike home ventilation systems, once the systems have been switched, they can only heat or cool. Where problems typically arise is when there is a stretch of warmer weather after the transition to heating has been made, or the transition to heating is made too late.

Often, people who have vents near their workstations experience the most problems. Ventilation systems are set to deliver air at a temperature that is lower than that shown on the thermostat. This is due to the higher heat load in the space from more occupants and electrical equipment such as computers and lights.

Here are some steps building owners can do during the transition to keep workers safe:

- Clean supply louvers to prevent air flow restriction
- Visually inspect duct work for dust accumulation
- Clean drip pans and other surfaces to remove any microbial growth
- Assure drains are not blocked that could lead to leaks

For more information, check out our fact sheets on mold and indoor air quality:

- **Mold:** <https://tinyurl.com/OSH-Mold>
- **MOHO:** <https://tinyurl.com/OSH-Moho1>
- **Indoor Air Quality:** <https://tinyurl.com/OSH-IAQ>

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CSEA's Occupational Safety & Health Activist's Guide to Safety in the Workplace

This guide is full of great information and resources designed to directly assist safety activists in the field. Whether you are looking for inspection checklists, sample letters to request safety and health information, or information on how to make the best arguments to gain safety improvements at your workplace, you can refer to the Activist's Guide.

View/download at cseany.org/safety or contact CSEA's Occupational Safety & Health Department to order print copies.

Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE)

This training course, rooted in the 'run, hide, fight' method, will go into further depth on ways people can protect themselves and others and respond correctly in the event they are in an active shooter situation. This workshop will include emotional testimonies and case studies from victims of previous active shooter incidents.

Watch and share the CRASE webinar on-demand: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8666650139324401936>