

THE SAFETY NET

CSEA

'TIS THE SEASON FOR WINTER HAZARD AWARENESS

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SAFETY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. Secretary of Labor Martin Walsh gives good news on unions

Unionization numbers will finally increase in 2023 and 2024!

During a recent press conference, U.S. Secretary of Labor Martin J. Walsh, a union-book carrier, said public support for unions should be matched by actual gains in union ranks in the next two years. The most recent survey available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that labor jobs decreased by more than 240,000 in 2021, even as U.S. public support for unionization has surged and major brands, including Apple, Amazon, and Starbucks, face a rising tide of unionization at stores and in operations like warehouses, albeit still on the margins as far as total numbers of workers they employ.

"I don't have the number on 2022, but 2021 was a unique year. The numbers went down in a lot of ways because companies' unions weren't organizing, number one, and number two, we had a pandemic and a lot of people retired, left their business or they retired. Those jobs weren't backfilled by companies. ... It's like 65%, 70% of Americans still looking favorably upon unions ... the highest in 50 years. I don't think you'll see the benefit of that organizing until probably 2023, 2024." – DOL Secretary Martin J. Walsh

Other recent polling has found that public support for unions is higher than union member support for their own labor organizations.

SAFETY TERM OF THE MONTH

Risk Assessment

A method for estimating health and safety risks from exposure to various levels of a workplace hazard. A qualitative or quantitative evaluation of the likelihood that an adverse health effect may occur under the prevalent conditions or other that are likely to develop. Factors to consider in a risk assessment:

- Toxicity of the material
- Frequency and duration of exposure/contact
- Control measures (engineering, administrative, or PPE) in use and their effectiveness
- Properties of the material
- Conditions of use (e.g., temperature, pressure, volume, etc.)
- Other general environmental conditions

"DEAR BERNIE" ADVICE COLUMN

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.*

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

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

Be an Advocate for Safety: Help Rebuild CSEA's Safety Network!

Download/print this newsletter in bulletin format: cseany.org/safetynet. Show us a photo of the bulletin posted in your workplace to receive a prize!

*Send photos to bernadette.foley@cseainc.org

Get Featured in the Safety Net!

We love hearing from you! Share your content by responding to the Safety Net's "Reader's Response," "Member Spotlight" or "Dear Bernie" newsletter column(s) and receive a prize!

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

Time is Running Out! Workers' Compensation COVID-19 Illness Claims

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. Don't be left out in the cold - protect your right to file a claim by contacting a workers' compensation attorney today!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Peer Trainers Palisades Interstate Park Commission Local 1st Vice President Cristian Gonzalez, back, and Taconic State Park Commission Local member Thomas Kearney, front, practice using non-entry rescue equipment at the CSEA Peer Trainer Program's Confined Space Train-the-Trainer, held October 3-7 in Saratoga Springs. Participants learned to teach a site-specific compliance course for their co-workers. For more information about the Peer Trainer Program, contact your local leadership or OSH Specialist.

Share your story, photo, meme, or simply give shout out to readers to be featured in the Safety Net Newsletter and receive a prize!



SEASONAL HAZARDS: STAYING SAFE IN COLD WEATHER CONDITIONS

The Hazards of Winter Weather

With winter in full swing across the country, many of us in New York have experienced our first measurable snowfall, including people in the Buffalo area, and are preparing for increased severity in the upcoming months. Exposure to cold weather presents a whole new set of hazards that can lead to dangerous or potentially fatal situations.

Who is at Risk?

All CSEA-represented employees are at some level of risk, regardless of work setting or job tasks. CSEA's diverse membership encompasses those who primarily, intermittently or occasionally work outdoors, as well as those who work exclusively indoors, although outdoor workers are at highest risk for all cold related hazards.

What are the Primary Risks?

While the workplace incidents mentioned below can happen at any time of year, winter weather conditions significantly increase the probability and severity of them occurring. Even in winter, these risks are often preventable, yet still account for a major portion of workplace injuries.

Winter Slips, Trips, and Falls

Falls are among the most common causes of serious work-related injuries and deaths. Ice, sleet, or snow were responsible for 41.5% of weather-related workplace fatalities in 2020. - *National Safety Council*

Specific Contributors to Winter Slips, Trips, and Falls:

- Snowmelt from wet footwear, creating slippery floors inside
- Icy conditions on surfaces outside, including sidewalks

and parking lots

- Snow covering and obscuring tripping hazards like curbs
 - Employees slipping when rushing to get out of the cold
- View our fact sheet on Fall Prevention: <https://tinyurl.com/OSHFallPrevention>**

Overexertion and Bodily Reaction

Causes include non-impact injuries that result from excessive physical effort directed at an outside source. These types of activities, which include shoveling snow, can cause back and shoulder injuries. Winter overexertion activities account for about 100 deaths per year on average. - National Safety Council

Examples of Winter Overexertion Activities:

Snow removal (shoveling, snow blowing, plowing, etc.)
Storm cleanup/remediation (removing downed trees, debris, salting walkways, etc.)

Cold-Related Illnesses

Caused by exposure to temperature extremes; low temperature, wind, and wetness are the three main challenges of cold environments. To learn more about the types of cold-related illnesses, symptoms, and what employers should do, **see our fact sheet: <https://tinyurl.com/OSHColdstress>**

Predisposing Conditions

Workers face increased risks when they take certain medications, are in poor physical condition or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or heart disease.

DID YOU KNOW?

Top three causes that account for more than 75% of all non-fatal injuries and illnesses:

1. **Slips, trips, and falls** (slips or trips without falling, falls to same or lower level)
2. **Overexertion** and bodily reaction (physical activities, e.g., lifting, pushing, carrying, etc.)
3. **Exposure** to harmful substances or environments (temperature extremes)

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MEMBER RESOURCES

Materials & Publications

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

Access our Publication Order Form: <https://tinyurl.com/OSHPublicationOrder>

Workshop Trainings & Webinars

This month's training highlights:

Workers' Compensation and COVID-19
Fall Protection
Outdoor Hazards
Personal Protective Equipment

View all on-demand webinar trainings: <https://cseany.org/osh-webinars>

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