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Press Release

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Workers Memorial Day is April 28; Alaska Work Fatalities at Record Low

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

“Fatal work injuries in Alaska decreased from 38 in 2011 to 30 in 2012, and preliminary data from 2013 show another record low for Alaska at 17 fatalities – but even one death is one too many,” said Grey Mitchell, assistant commissioner of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Alaska also saw 17 fatalities in 2009.

The majority of Alaska fatalities are in the transportation industry, although the heli-skiing industry’s recent fatalities are of concern, he said.

“While workers Memorial Day provides an opportunity to remember and honor those who lost their lives on the job, it’s also a time for a commitment from Alaska employers and workers to eliminate these tragedies,” Mitchell said. “Workplace fatalities can be avoided through adequate training and equipment.”

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.

According to the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries program conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4,628 fatal work injuries were recorded in the U.S. in 2012, fewer than the final count of 4,693 in 2011.

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.

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Alaska Workplace Fatalities
laborstats.alaska.gov/injfatal/fatal.htm

Alaska Labor Standards and Safety
labor.alaska.gov/lss/

Alaska Occupational Safety and Health (AKOSH)
labor.alaska.gov/lss/oshhome.htm

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Workplace Fatality Data
bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm