

# The Safety & Health Advisor

## Spring 2022



### Motor Vehicle Crash/Fatality Data and Prevention

Motor vehicle accidents continue to be the #1 cause of work-related fatalities, according to data from the National Safety Council (NSC). NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) projects that an estimated 31,720 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes from January 2021 through September 2021, an increase of approximately 12% from the 28,325 fatalities projected for the first nine months of 2020. The projection is the highest number of fatalities during the first nine months of any year since 2006 and the highest percentage increase during the first nine months in the Fatality Analysis Reporting System's history. This increase is a deadly trend that started last year (2020) during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and negates more than 15 years of progress in preventing death on U.S. roads."

See <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/traffic-fatalities-estimates-jan-sept-2021> for additional details.

Estimates from the NSC last year also showed the total motor-vehicle deaths for the first six months of 2021 were up 16% as compared to the same period in 2020 and up 17% from the same period as well in 2019. Mileage in the first six months of 2021 did increase 13% from 2020, but still lags 2019 mileage by nearly 6% due to the ongoing pandemic. The estimated mileage death rate in 2021 is 1.43 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, up 3% from 1.39 in 2020 and up 24% from 1.15 in 2019.

NSC reports that the three (3) biggest causes of MVF are *impaired driving* (due to alcohol, drugs (including opioids, cannabis and some over-the-counter medicines), *speeding* and *lack of seat belt use*. They called on Americans in all states to practice the following safe driving behaviors: distraction-free driving, slowing down and moving over, sober driving,

### Highlights in this Issue

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*New England Severe Weather Preparedness*  
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*National Safety Council - Seminar Announcement*  
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use of seat belts, check for recalls, and supporting changes to roadway safety.

See <https://www.nsc.org/newsroom/nsc-preliminary-estimates-motor-vehicle-deaths-con> for details.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) *National Roadway Safety Strategy* (NRSS) and ongoing safety programs are working towards a future with zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries. "The DOT's *Safe System* approach has been embraced by the transportation community as an effective way to address and mitigate the risks inherent in our enormous and complex transportation system."



Source: FHWA.

See <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS> and [USDOT-National-Roadway-Safety-Strategy.pdf](https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS) for additional details.

Atlantic Charter's Safety and Health Consultants are NSC members. Feel free to reach out to your Consultant for safe driver policies and other safe driving resources.

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### Severe Weather Preparedness

Hurricanes can cause major damage because of storm surge, wind damage, rip currents, and flooding. Storm surge is historically the leading cause of hurricane-related deaths in the United States. In 2021, the US faced the “second highest number of billion-dollar weather and climate disasters on record” and suffered the largest number of disaster-related deaths, totaling 538 Americans within the U.S. This is the most in a decade according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

It’s important for your organization to determine your risk when it comes to hurricanes and adverse weather to stay prepared and safe. By knowing what actions to take before the hurricane season begins, when a hurricane approaches, and when the storm is in your area as well as what to do after a hurricane leaves your area, you can increase your chance of survival.

During storms, high winds and flash flooding become a risk for cities and neighborhoods. Taking precautions in advance of the storms, such as developing an emergency plan, learning the warning signs, and monitoring the weather can help you stay safe if a hurricane or flooding occurs in your area.

Flooding can occur when rivers and lakes cannot contain excessive rain or snow melt, or when rain cannot be absorbed fully into the ground. It can also occur when waterways overflow due to debris or ice, when winds from tropical storms or hurricanes cause storm surge in coastal areas, or when water containment systems (such as levees, dams, pipes) break. “Flooding is the most common hazard in Massachusetts. Some floods develop slowly, while flash floods can occur within minutes or hours after a storm or containment system break,” according to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

An emergency plan should be developed within the workplace (and for home) to prepare for hurricanes or other adverse weather conditions. The plan should include details on suitable places to take shelter, evacuation routes, policies to ensure all personnel are accounted for, assembling an emergency kit, and procedures for addressing any hazardous materials that are on-site.

As businesses take steps to recover after a hurricane or flooding, workers may face significant hazards while cleaning up including the potential for additional storms, electrical hazards, cold related illnesses, and handling sharp debris. Workers should also be aware of hazards from heat stress and be familiar with equipment used during response/recovery operations, such as portable generators. Workers will need to take special precautions in order to stay safe during response and recovery operations.

**Employer Responsibilities** - Each employer is responsible for the safety and health of its workers and for providing a safe and healthful workplace for its workers. Employers are required to protect workers from the anticipated hazards associated with the response and recovery operations that workers are likely to conduct.

**Potential Hazards** - Response and recovery work after severe weather presents safety and health hazards that should be properly identified, evaluated, and controlled in a systematic manner to reduce or eliminate occupational safety and health risks to response and recovery workers. Some of the specific hazards associated with working after storms include:

- Hazardous driving conditions due to slippery and/or blocked roadways.
- Slips and falls due to slippery walkways.
- Falling and flying objects such as tree limbs and utility poles.
- Sharp objects including nails and broken glass.
- Electrical hazards from downed power lines or downed objects in contact with power lines.
- Burns from fires caused by energized line contact or equipment failure.
- Exhaustion from working extended shifts and dehydration.

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Here is a 72-Hour Disaster Supplies Kit Checklist provided by UMass Lowell – The NE Consortium.

### Disaster Supplies Kit ( 72 Hours )

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery
- Masks (for everyone ages 2 and above), soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces
- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher

The National Safety Council's National Preparedness Month (NPM) is an observance each September to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. There are weekly themes. See <https://www.ready.gov/september> for additional details.

Here are some additional links related to severe weather emergency preparedness:

<https://www.osha.gov/emergency-preparedness>

<https://www.weather.gov/safety/hurricane>

<https://www.weather.gov/mhx/hurricaneprep>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/2021-came-close-to-tying-the-record-for-billion-dollar-disasters>

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*New Hampshire Safety & Health Conference 2022*



*The National Safety Council of Northern New England (NSCNNE) is holding its Annual Safety & Health Conference on Tuesday and Wednesday, **June 7-8, 2022** at the newly renovated Sheraton Nashua Hotel.*

*Registration is now open for either in-person or virtual attendance for one or both days (if circumstances change you can switch between in-person or virtual attendance by contacting NSCNNE prior to the conference date). There are a number of general and breakout sessions on various topics planned for both general industry and construction as well as a vendor expo. You don't have to be a NSC member or a business operating in New Hampshire to attend.*

*The registration fee depends on whether or not your organization is a National Safety Council (NSC) member and when you register. **Early bird** discount rate **until April 19, 2022**.*

*The conference brochure providing schedule, session information, registration fees and enrollment process is provided at the following link:*  
<https://www.nscnne.org/nh-conference>



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### Safety and Health Considerations for Young Workers

With the ongoing pandemic, employers have had difficulty filling positions and may be relying more on young workers (i.e. high school or college age) to help fill vacancies. Pre-pandemic an organization was likely to only employ young workers for busy seasonal times (i.e. holidays, peak production times) or as “summer help”.

Eighty percent of U.S. teenagers work during their high school years. In 2015, a NIOSH study reported that 403 workers less than 24 years of age died of work-related

injuries, including 24 who were less than 18 years of age.

Recent statistics may be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth/default.html>

Often times these young workers may be related to permanent employees and could possibly enter the workforce without following the typical hiring process, which can put them and the organization at risk. While the focus of this article is on younger workers, similar concerns may exist and principles applied for new, seasonal or temporary workers of any age (including migrant workers) or even for the general workforce.

The best practice is to vet young workers using the same procedures that are used to screen their older counterparts. These include providing the same safety orientation, specific safety training and avoiding placement into non-permitted occupations.

Due to generational differences, learning styles and attention spans, the training content may need to be delivered to younger workers using a variety of means (beyond traditional classroom) to be effective. This could include practical hands-on workshops, short demonstrations, team/peer exercises, storytelling, role play, interactive activities/games and use of newer technologies. Younger generations need and expect more on-the-job training.

Increased supervision is also an important consideration for new or young workers.

OSHA, the National Safety Council and other similar organizations have launched a collaborative effort to address the safety needs of this population with comprehensive information, resources and links made available at: [www.keepteenworkerssafe.org/](http://www.keepteenworkerssafe.org/)

Additional information to protect temporary workers is available from OSHA at:

[www.osha.gov/temporaryworkers](http://www.osha.gov/temporaryworkers) and for young workers at: [www.osha.gov/young-workers-summer-jobs](http://www.osha.gov/young-workers-summer-jobs) and [www.osha.gov/young-workers](http://www.osha.gov/young-workers)

With regard to young workers, there are also specific labor law requirements when employing workers under the age of 18 that address jobs permitted, work hours permitted and minimum wages.

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This article addresses only non-agricultural youth workers with a focus on non-permitted occupations. At the federal level, there are two laws that protect young workers, which are the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act. In addition to FLSA and OSHA, in Massachusetts there are additional Child Labor Laws.

- The U.S. Department of Labor listing of prohibited occupations and work tasks may be viewed at:  
<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/youthlabor/hazardousjobs>
- For Massachusetts this information may be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/prohibited-jobs-for-minors>
- Information for New Hampshire may be found here:  
<https://www.nh.gov/labor/documents/child-labor-guide.pdf>

Despite various laws prohibiting certain types of work, there are still potential hazards faced by young workers in permitted jobs including temperature stress, noise, slips, trips, falls, strains, sprains, burns, cuts or eye injuries. Many of these injuries can have a life-long impact.

### Lone Worker Safety

As organizations digitalize and remote operations become more commonplace, the number of lone workers is on the rise. Lone workers exist in every industry and include individuals such as travelling healthcare workers, contractors, self-employed workers, and those who work off-site or outside normal business hours. These employees perform job duties alone and are often distanced from typical organizational resources, such as Home Health VNA's (Nurses and Home Health Aides who visit patients), manufacturing businesses with third shift operations that perform cleaning/sanitation, or manufacturing with machine operators who work mostly alone. These employees are at increased risk for unaddressed workplace accidents or emergencies, inadequate rest and breaks, physical violence, and more.

The most common injuries occur from slips, trips and falls, which were the [cause](#) of 700 deaths in 2016, as well as close to 50,000 injuries that required time off work. More than 20,000 workers in the private industry experienced trauma from non-fatal workplace violence in 2018, which also made them unable to do their jobs, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regardless of the industry, performing tasks alone can increase the chance of injury and decrease the chance of immediate medical care. If a lone worker is injured on the job, there may not be anyone nearby to assist them or contact help.

Organizations with lone workers should consider both general and industry-specific risks and develop corresponding prevention and response strategies. To do so, employers should seek to understand their legal responsibilities (e.g. "duty of care"), the importance of risk assessments and lone worker policies, and the value of effective risk management tools. Employers should also speak with their team members to understand perceived risks and ensure that lone worker policies appropriately address employee concerns.

The duty of care is a moral and legal principle describing an employer's obligation to promote employee health and safety and to protect its workforce from undue risk. This includes identifying and mitigating hazards and establishing measures to safeguard employees, regardless of the worksite. To develop a duty of care program, employers must consider the nature of their work environments, employee responsibilities and tasks, and the necessary materials and equipment required to successfully complete the job. Depending on the organization and industry, duty of care may include providing certain workplace materials, establishing a reporting process, and soliciting ongoing employee feedback.

#### *10 Ways to Protect Lone Workers*

1. **Define the worker:** Employees may work alone at a job site in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available.

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These workers cannot be seen or heard by anyone else (ex: workers in remote locations, after-hours housekeeping staff, field engineers, etc.)

- 2. Understand the Law and OSHA Regulations:** Employers have an obligation to protect lone workers outlined through OSHA 1915.84 (Shipyards standard\*). Working alone is common in the U.S., but OSHA's [General Duty Clause](#) requires organizations to consider and address risks to lone workers performing tasks on fixed and mobile work sites.
- 3. Identify Hazards:** Whether the lone worker on your team is operating in a patient's home, alternate office space, laboratory, warehouse or construction jobsite, it's important to identify and understand the hazards they may encounter while performing their duties. Additional work sites and risks may be identified during an employer's job hazard analysis.
- 4. Assess Risks:** Regardless of your legal requirements, you need to assess the risk of the hazards you've identified. Evaluate job sites, practices and job hazard analyses for lone work potential.
- 5. Control Risks:** Engineer out lone work hazards that pose a high risk for serious injuries and fatalities (ex: purchase/maintain safer motor vehicles, provide guarding on power tools). Keep in mind to train lone workers to conduct their own task hazard analyses before starting a job. Establish a check-in process with a frequency that matches the risk of the task.
- 6. Prohibit Certain Tasks:** You may need to eliminate certain types of lone work or tasks that present the greatest risk for serious injuries and fatalities. Implement a buddy system to provide help or backup personnel.
- 7. Supervise Lone Workers:** The level of supervision required for lone work depends entirely on the risk of the job at hand, the abilities of the person responsible and their

willingness to support safety and health objectives. Your risk assessment should give you a relatively clear road map for making management decisions on a case-by-case basis.

- 8. Monitor Lone Workers:** Keep tabs on worker location, progress, and safety while they are isolated. Setting up regular communication intervals in advance like in-person check-ins, wearable technology, or cell phones when service is available — will help you establish a routine and more quickly identify issues, should they arise. Employee tracking solutions allow businesses to know where their lone worker employees are when they are working away from a fixed base — through a [mobile app](#), smart device or [wearable technology](#).

*Vendor Links:*

<https://www.geoprosolutions.com/en-us/>;  
<https://www.blacklinesafety.com/>

- 9. Conduct Program Audits:** Track your progress and conduct annual audits to assess the efficacy of procedures in place.
- 10. Focus on Improvement** Correct any issues you identify with lone workers at any points throughout the year. While training enhancements and more in-depth changes may take more time, you can make other changes — such as eliminating high-risk lone work tasks — immediately to keep people safe.

OSHA does not have a specific requirement to develop and implement a work alone policy. But failure to have a policy could be considered a General Duty OSHA requirement and has been cited by OSHA in the past under the General Duty statute.

Here are a few additional links:

<https://www.assp.org/news-and-articles/how-to-protect-lone-workers-with-a-safety-management-program>  
<https://www.ehstoday.com/safety/article/21161012/how-to-keep-lone-workers-safe>  
<https://safetyculture.com/checklists/lone-working-risk-assessment/>