

SAFETY & LOSS PREVENTION

OUTLOOK

Making the Connection

HOW MAKING IMPROVEMENTS
TO WORKPLACE SAFETY
INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY

Also Inside:

- Easing into Daylight Saving Time
- OSHA's Top Ten
- Improving heart health
- Florida's Department of Transportation targets safety through employee recognition

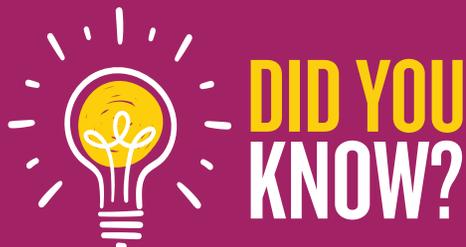




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In a working world that calls for constant increases in production and efficiency, many people mistakenly believe that putting resources into creating a safe workplace costs too much time and money, and that boosting productivity means sacrificing safety, and vice versa. However, increasing workplace safety not only increases productivity but lowers business costs and creates a happier, healthier, more efficient workforce.

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**DID YOU
KNOW?**

Tablets dating back to ancient Sumeria (around 2050 B.C.) outline the “law of Ur,” which provided monetary compensation for specific injury to workers’ body parts — believed to be the earliest example of workers’ compensation in recorded history.

THE LINK BETWEEN SAFETY & PRODUCTIVITY

HOW IMPROVEMENTS TO ONE BENEFIT THEM BOTH AND STRENGTHEN THE CHAIN AS A WHOLE

MAKING THE CONNECTION

A common misconception held by many is that safety and productivity in the workplace are opposed to each other. In reality, these two goals are not in conflict, but are directly connected more like links in the same chain. In order for it to function, each link must be strong and effective, whereas weakness in one link can render the whole chain useless.

Poor safety management can not only risk the health and safety of employees, but productivity and operations as well. Taking shortcuts on safety may seem to create short-term gains in productivity, but those gains can disappear or even become losses the instant an accident occurs. On the other hand, having unreasonable rules or unrealistic safety expectations risks sacrificing performance. The key to excellence in both areas is striking the right balance between them.

Once the link between safety and productivity has been acknowledged and accepted by an organization, processes can be improved in ways that incorporate and enhance both. The following are some tools and techniques you can use to “strengthen the chain” in your workplace.

FINDING THE WEAK LINKS — AND FIXING THEM

A safe work environment leaves workers better able to focus on their job tasks instead of worrying about potential health and safety hazards, increasing both the quality and capacity of their work. Employees who are actively engaged in their work are not only more productive but more likely to prioritize safety. Unfortunately, less than one third of employees report being truly engaged at work, according to a 2017 Gallop poll, costing employers an estimated \$450-550 billion each year. Disengaged employees are more likely to lose focus, cut corners, drag their feet or rush through projects, make errors, and cause accidents.

The results of a 2017 National Safety Council survey indicated that 36% of US workers felt that their organization prioritized productivity over safety. Additionally, 30% said they felt uncomfortable speaking up about safety issues, indicating an unhealthy safety culture in the workplace. Asking your own employees where they believe the organization’s priorities lie can give you an indication of the current state of your safety culture and point out weak spots in the chain. By focusing on those areas, employers can empower

70% of U.S. employees report they are not engaged at work



“



36% say safety takes a back seat to completing job tasks



30% say they are too afraid to report safety issues

”



study stated that their mental health at work has declined since the pandemic began, resulting in an increase in substance abuse and other self-harming behaviors.

Employees who feel anxious about health risks at work will have a more difficult time focusing on their work; making changes to workplace procedures that allow employees to feel safer can boost their mental health, which in turn boosts their productivity. Psychological safety promotes creativity, innovation, and engagement in the workplace.

OSHA recommends allowing employees to actively participate in the health and safety of their workplace, giving them a sense of empowerment and control over their surroundings, which can lower anxiety. Employers can encourage this by conducting safety workshops, checking in with their employees individually to discuss any concerns, and taking those concerns seriously.



CREATE A STRONG SAFETY CULTURE

Another way to improve mental and physical health is by ensuring your workplace has a strong culture of safety in which employees feel that their safety is not only considered but prioritized as a core value, and where potential safety hazards can be addressed without fear of reprisal or backlash. A strong culture of safety brings together all the elements we've already discussed, resulting in increased worker engagement, less anxiety and more job satisfaction, and a stronger commitment to working safely.

Read more about building a strong safety culture in our [July-Sept 2021 issue](#) of the Outlook.

February is
**HEART
HEALTH
MONTH!**



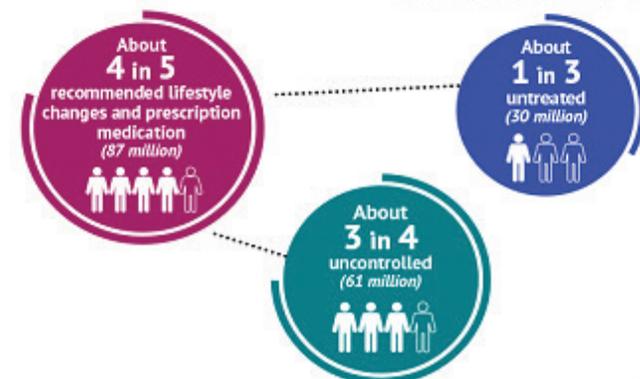
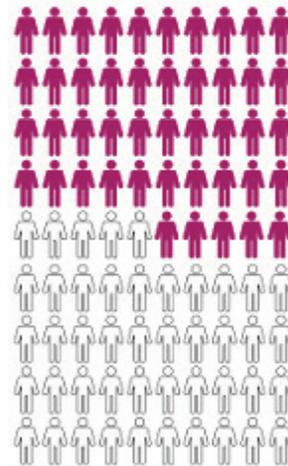
Nearly **1 in 2** U.S. adults
have hypertension,
yet only about 1 in 4 have it under control.

Feeling the pressure? CDC can help.

cdc.gov/heartmonth



U.S. adults with
hypertension
45%
(108 million)



how to spring forward without falling behind

Spring is nearly here, ushering in the return of warmer temperatures, flowers blooming ... and Daylight Saving Time (DST). Whether you love to “spring forward” or you hate it, the fact remains that rolling the clocks ahead one hour each year disrupts our internal body clocks, leaving us sleep deprived, which greatly affects our mood, behavior, focus, productivity, and overall health.

DST 2022 begins on Sunday, March 13, so be prepared. Here are some things you can do to lessen the blow:

BEFORE THE TIME CHANGE

- 🕒 **Ease into the new schedule gradually.** Starting on Monday before the time change (March 7), move your routine back by 10 minutes each day. Example:

	WAKE	LUNCH	DINNER	BEDTIME
NORMAL SCHEDULE	7:00 AM	12:00 PM	6:30 PM	10:00 PM
MON MARCH 7	6:50 AM	11:50 AM	6:20 PM	9:50 PM
TUE MARCH 8	6:40 AM	11:40 AM	6:10 PM	9:40 PM
WED MARCH 9	6:30 AM	11:30 AM	6:00 PM	9:30 PM
THU MARCH 10	6:20 AM	11:20 AM	5:50 PM	9:20 PM
FRI MARCH 11	6:10 AM	11:10 AM	5:40 PM	9:10 PM
SAT MARCH 12	6:00 AM	11:00 AM	5:30 PM	9:00 PM
TIME CHANGE				
SAT MARCH 13	7:00 AM DST	12:00 PM DST	6:30 PM DST	10:00 PM DST

It may seem strange to go to bed at 9pm on Saturday night if you are accustomed to a 10pm bedtime, but remember that the same time on Sunday will actually be 10pm. Simulating the schedule ahead of time can help your body adjust easier than making the jump ahead an hour all at once.

- 🕒 **Change the clock.** Visual cues can help us adjust to new situations – try switching a prominently-placed clock to DST a few days before the time change and look at it often, thinking about how it will “feel different” (light patterns, hunger, alertness, etc.).

AFTER THE TIME CHANGE

- 🕒 **Get active in the a.m.** Exercise can be good for sleep, but a workout too late at night can actually keep you wired past your bedtime, and when bedtime suddenly arrives an hour earlier, it can be even more difficult to get to sleep. Get your workout in earlier in the day to give your body time to wind down for sleep.
- 🕒 **Practice healthy eating and drinking habits.** Staying hydrated and limiting intake of caffeine and alcohol can help your body clock better regulate itself. Eating more protein and fewer carbs can keep you from feeling sluggish.
- 🕒 **Get into (or out of) the light.** Light levels tell your brain when to be awake and when to sleep. Take advantage of this by bathing in bright light in the morning (ideally sunlight) and dimming the lights in the evening. Even wearing sunglasses in the late afternoon can help trigger your brain to release melatonin (a hormone that helps prepare us for sleep). Don’t forget to turn off those electronics at least an hour before bed.

Each year, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) releases its list of the most frequently cited violations in order to give employers a sense of which hazards might deserve some extra attention.

Here is their list for 2021, which compiles data from the previous fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021).

OSHA'S TOP 10

- 10. MACHINE GUARDING (1,113)(-15%):** Any machine part, function, or process that may cause injury, either through normal operation or accidental contact, requires specialized guarding to eliminate or mitigate the hazard.
- 9. POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS (1,932)(-27%):** This applies to fire protection, design, maintenance, and use of specialized industrial vehicles such as platform lifts and forklifts, motorized hand trucks, and tractors.
- 8. EYE & FACE PROTECTION (1,452)(+6%):** Employers must ensure that employees are provided with and instructed to use appropriate protection when exposed to eye or face hazards such as flying particles, molten metal, liquid chemicals, gases or vapors, or potentially injurious light radiation.
- 7. FALL PROTECTION – TRAINING REQUIREMENTS (1,666)(+3%):** Employers must provide training to enable employees to recognize fall hazards, as well as knowledge and training of fall mitigation procedures put in place.
- 6. LOCKOUT/TAGOUT (1,698)(-18%):** This refers to specific procedures meant to safeguard employees from the unexpected startup of machinery and equipment, or the release of hazardous energy during service or maintenance activities.
- 5. HAZARD COMMUNICATION (1,947)(-39%):** This applies to labels on chemicals conveying hazard information, as well as signage alerting employees and others to hazardous conditions such as wet floors, fall risks, or weight limits.
- 4. SCAFFOLDING (1,948)(-23%):** Anyone working on a scaffold more than ten feet above a lower level must be provided protection such as guardrails and/or fall arrest systems. Common violations include overloaded or unsecured scaffolds, improperly installed guardrails, or planking that is too weak or has large gaps.
- 3. LADDERS (2,026)(-5%):** Ladders must meet basic requirements, such as parallel and uniformly spaced rungs, as well as requirements specific to their job task, such as the ability to support at least four times the maximum intended load for the task. They must also be installed correctly.
- 2. RESPIRATORY PROTECTION (2,527)(-5%):** Employees exposed to harmful dust, fog, smoke, mist, gas, vapor, or spray must be provided respiratory protection to mitigate the risk of cancer, lung impairment, or death.
- 1. FALL PROTECTION – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS (5,295)(-2%):** Any employee working four or more feet above the ground must be provided with fall protection.

While the standards themselves haven't changed much, the total number of citations have consistently fallen in nearly every category since 2018 (only Fall Protection Training and Eye & Face Protection increased in 2021). This most recent year saw a 13% drop in total citations, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic necessitating many employees working from home for much or part of the year, according to OSHA's deputy director of enforcement, Patrick Kapust.

OUTLOOK SPECIAL FEATURE

FLORIDA'S DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CELEBRATES SAFETY SUCCESSES WITH EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Brenda Young, P.E., CPM
State Safety Engineer, FDOT

Safety training provided by the DFS Division of Risk Management highlights the keys to an effective employee safety awareness program: communication, education, demonstration of safe work practices, involvement of safety personnel, and recognition of employees. These represent elements that support an organizational safety culture, which aligns with the mission and vision of the Florida Department of Transportation – not just in relation to transportation safety, but also workplace safety for all employees. This ensures every FDOT employee understands the critical importance of safety and their role to support it.

In order to broaden the approach to employee safety awareness and support this culture of safety, FDOT has created a comprehensive package of safety awards as a way for employees to recognize their peers' efforts toward improving both transportation and workplace safety.

The **Safety Recognition Package** provides informal and formal ways to reward employees who take the initiative to help prevent work-related accidents and injuries.

INFORMAL ELEMENTS: Employees are encouraged to informally recognize colleagues at any time with one of the following:

- **Target Zero Safety Shoutout Badge** – This new safety badge was created for the internal FDOT “Shoutout” board, which uses various themed badges for its employees to recognize colleagues for their work.
- **Anytime Safety Award Certificate** – As a component of its “Anytime Recognition” award program, FDOT created this certificate for employees to receive, which is signed by the Florida Secretary of Transportation. Recipients are announced at internal Town Hall meetings.



FORMAL ELEMENTS: FDOT’s Annual Awards program and procedures feature several competitive awards to acknowledge employees who have significantly contributed to the agency’s success, as well as to honor past FDOT employees. Recipients of these awards are given a medallion and a \$95 gift card:

- **The Annual Safety Award** is given to one FDOT employee in each district across the state, honoring the legacy of Jeannette Rouse (see below).
- **The Secretary’s Statewide Annual Safety Award** is given annually to one FDOT employee, selected by the Florida Secretary of Transportation, from the pool of nominees who received the statewide award in each district.

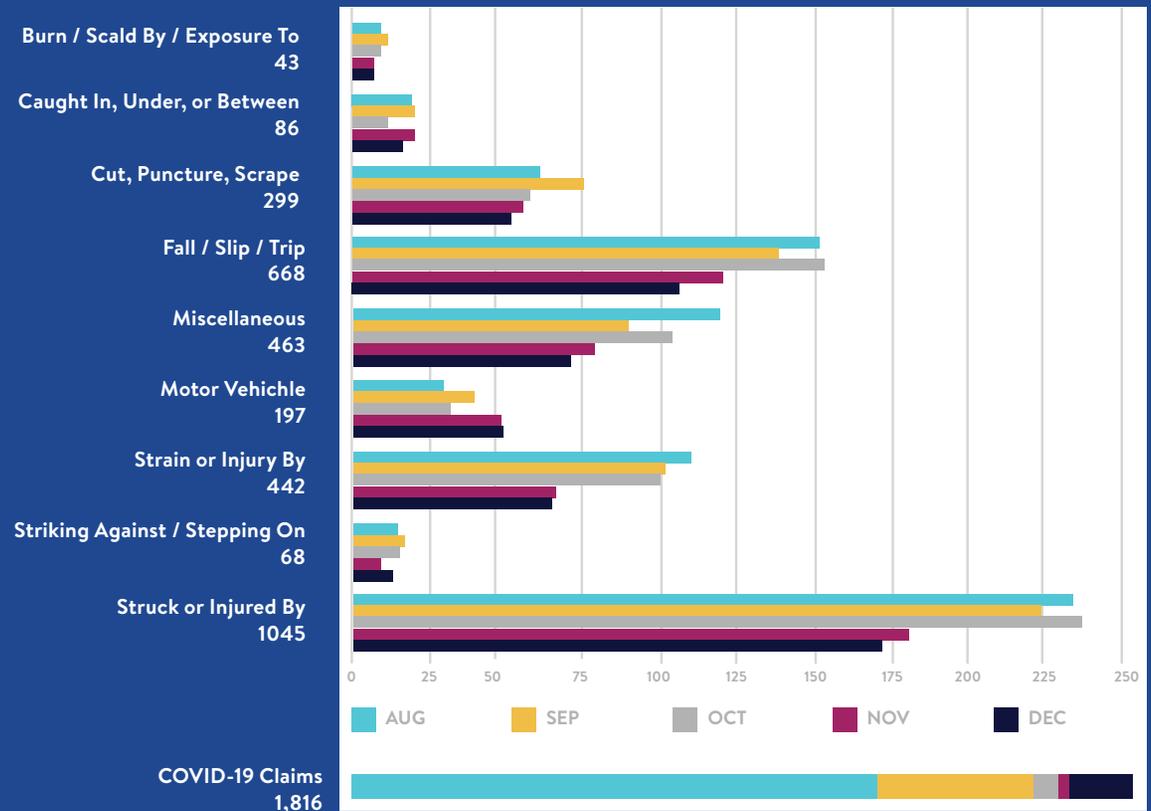
JEANNETTE ROUSE



The Annual Safety Award honors the memory of **Jeannette Rouse**, a valued FDOT employee who was instrumental in the development of Florida’s Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) program. Jeannette was a creative, vibrant advocate for safety in any realm and demonstrated this in her daily action. The CTST program provides vital support to those who implement the Strategic Highway Safety Plan, comprised of multi-jurisdictional agencies at the local level statewide that integrate engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency services to solve traffic safety challenges.

OUTLOOK SNAPSHOT

2021 STATE OF FLORIDA WORKERS’ COMPENSATION CLAIMS BY CAUSE



Total number of workers’ compensation claims for Aug-Dec 2021: **5,127**.

The total number of claims decreased significantly over these five months, starting with **1,967** in August and dropping to **549** in December, the smallest number of claims in several years. Though the decrease in COVID-19 claims accounts for most of this, the end of 2021 saw its lowest numbers of “**Strain or Injury By**” and “**Struck or Injured By**” claims since 2019.

The majority of claims over this period were due to **COVID-19**; however, the state saw a steady drop each month, starting August with 1,222 cases and ending November with just 17 cases. December brought another surge with 150 cases reported. (COVID-19 claims are depicted in the color bar below the main graph.)

“**STRUCK OR INJURED BY**” remains the second most common type of claim, with the subset “**FELLOW WORKER/PATIENT**” making up the majority of injuries in this category.

“**FALL/SLIP/TRIP**” accounts for 20% of total claims for the period (excluding COVID-19), which is nearly **1% higher** than the previous 4-month period and more than **3% higher** than the national average, according to OSHA.

“**MISCELLANEOUS**” includes subcategories such as “Absorption/Ingestion/Inhalation,” “Cumulative,” “Foreign Matter,” “Natural Disasters,” and “Person in Act of a Crime.” (COVID-19 claims fall under this category but have been separated out and are not included in the monthly totals on the main graph.)

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