

2024 CT License Renewal

Part II





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

OSHA's General Duty Clause requires employers to provide a work environment free from known hazards that can cause death or serious injury. Industry-specific OSHA standards — including those for general industry, shipyards, longshoring, and construction — can be found on OSHA's website.

OSHA Trade Release

OSHA announces switch from traditional hard hats to safety helmets to protect agency employees from head injuries better

Head Protection: Safety Helmets in the Workplace

Two Types (impact) and three Classes (electrical) of head protection are recognized.

Type I head protection offers protection from blows to the top of the head.

Type II head protection offers protection from blows to the top and sides of the head.

Class G (General) head protection is designed to reduce exposure to low voltage conductors and are proof tested at 2,200 volts (phase to ground).

Class E (Electrical) head protection is designed to reduce exposure to higher voltage conductors and are proof tested at 20,000 volts (phase to ground).

Class C (Conductive) head protection is not intended to provide protection against contact with electrical hazards.

Construction Sites. For construction sites, especially those with high risks of falling objects and debris, impacts from equipment, awkward working positions, and/or slip, trip, and fall hazards: consider Type II head protection with chin straps.

Oil and Gas Industry. For oil and gas industry worksites where workers face multiple hazards, including potential exposure to chemicals and severe impacts: consider Type II head protection with integrated eye and face protection, like face shields and goggles.

Working from Heights. For tasks or jobs that involve working from heights: consider head protection with chin straps to prevent the head protection from falling off.

Electrical Work. For tasks involving electrical work or proximity to electrical hazards, head protection with non-conductive materials (Class G and Class E) provide protection to prevent electrical shocks. NOTE – Vented hard hats or safety helmets cannot be used for electrical work.

Always refer to the manufacturer's specific guidelines for head protection care, use, and storage.

Workplace Mental Health

Mental health is an important component of overall well-being

Mental health concerns due to work have the potential to adve

Stress affects people in a variety of ways such as muscle tension

Traumatic Events

Sometimes a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience can be so intense that it can have an emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical impact on a person.

Some examples of traumatic events that can happen in workplaces are:

- Explosions or chemical releases
- Co-workers being injured or dying on the job
- Abuse or assault of a co-worker or client

After experiencing a traumatic event people may:

- Feel anxious, sad, or angry
- Have terrifying thoughts or flashbacks
- Have recurring nightmares

Be confused or unable to think clearly

- Have a hard time falling and staying asleep
- Frighten easily

Substance Use Disorder

Substance use disorder is a persistent desire for substances even in the face of negative consequences. Some people come to rely on opioids, stimulants, alcohol, or other substances even when the substances cause harm. People may develop a dependence on drugs, including prescription medications, and alcohol for many reasons, including the presence of other mental health conditions, chronic pain, or injuries.

Regardless of the underlying reason, substance use disorder can be treated and controlled.

Suicide

Suicide can touch anyone, anywhere, at any time.

But it is not inevitable. Help is available.

According to the CDC^{1,2}

- More than 12 million adults seriously think about
- More than 3 million adults make a plan to commit •
- More than 48,000 people die by suicide in the United States each year.

Certain factors may increase an individual's risk of developing suicidal thoughts and attempting suicide such as:

- Mental health conditions like depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, and substance use disorders
- Traumatic events
- Health issues like chronic pain or illness
- Prolonged stress
- Recent tragedy or loss
- Criminal or legal problems
- Job loss or financial problems
- Substance use disorder
- Childhood trauma
- Domestic violence

Long-Term Stress Harms Everyone in the Workplace

Stress is not always bad. In fact, in the workplace, stress can prompt workers to stay focused on a task or meet a deadline. Extensive and prolonged stress in the workplace, however, can harm workers' physical and mental health, negatively affecting an organization's success.

Employers can help alleviate workplace stress by supporting their workers

Unions and worker organizations can also support workplace mental health and well-being through their member services, outreach, and community engagement work.

Statistics

- Nearly one in five US adults live with a mental illness?.
 - Workplace stress has been reported to cause 120,000 deaths in the US each year?.
 - Approximately 65% of U.S. workers surveyed have characterized work as being a very significant or somewhat significant source of stress in each year from 2019-20214.
 - 83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress and 54% of workers report that work stress affects their home life?.
 - For every \$1 spent on ordinary mental health concerns, employers see a \$4 return in productivity gains
- Stress can be harmful to our health and increase mental health challenges

Work has always presented various stress. Workers are constantly dealing with new stressors introduced to the workplace, and in some instances, these stressors have amplified other issues at work.

More than 80% of US workers have reported experiencing workplace stress, and more than 50% believe their stress related to work impacts their life at home.

Workplace stressors may include:

- Concerns about job security (e.g., potential lay-offs, reductions in assigned hours).
- Lack of access to the tools and equipment needed to perform work safely.
- Fear of employer retaliation
- Facing confrontation from customers, patients, co-workers, supervisors, or employers.
- Adapting to new or different workspace and schedule or work rules.
- Having to learn new or different tasks or take on more responsibilities.
- Having to work more frequent or extended shifts or being unable to take adequate breaks.
- Physically demanding work.
schooling or juggling other caregiving responsibilities while trying to work, such as caring for sick, elderly, or disabled household members.
- Concerns about work performance and productivity.
- Concerns about the safety of using public transit as a commuting option.

Training Resources

The idea of talking about stress and mental health at work might feel scary or too personal.

These can be sensitive topics that require a foundation of trust and goodwill to broach, or alternatively, the support for a worker to seek external resources and assistance outside of the workplace.

Guidance and Tips for Employers

- **Be aware** and acknowledge that people can carry an emotional load that is unique to their own circumstances. They may be experiencing heightened levels of loneliness, isolation, uncertainty, grief, and stress; and some may face additional demands, such as parents caring for children or elderly household members; and those with existing mental health or substance use challenges.
- **Identify factors are making it harder for workers to get their jobs done** and determine if adjustments can be made.
- **Show empathy.** Ensure workers that 1) they are not alone, 2) their employer understands the stress they are under, 3) there is no shame in feeling anxious, and 4) asking for help is important. Employers can reassure employees they are open and receptive to discussions about employees' work stress, by creating a safe and trustworthy space.
- **Provide access** to coping and resiliency resources, workplace and leave flexibilities without penalty, or other supportive networks and services. Research from the American Psychological Association suggests 50% of employees find that a lack of paid time off or sick leave has a negative impact on stress levels at work.

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However, there are ways in which employers, supervisors, and co-workers can support each other, and training is available on a variety of relevant topics. Ideally, employers should provide training for supervisors and workers to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of stress.

Real World Solutions

There's no one-size-fits-all strategy when it comes to alleviating workplace stress. The most effective approach is to identify the specific stressors associated with a particular job or industry and take concrete and practical steps to remove or lessen those stressors.

Much can be learned by exploring what others are already doing and tips experts in the field have identified to address workplace stress. Some of the approaches discussed below can be applied to any workplace; others focus on specific groups, such as hybrid and remote workers, working parents and other caregivers, young workers, frontline workers, those in customer service roles, and workers who do manual labor, among other workers.

Outreach Materials

It is imperative to talk about mental health; shine light on the stressors; strategize about ways to alleviate stress them; and be on the lookout for signs and symptoms of stress and mental health emergencies so that people can either direct themselves, their friends, co-workers or family members to helpful coping and resiliency resources or other supportive networks and services if needed.