

APRIL 2025

# DYING FOR WORK

Dying for Work in Massachusetts:  
Loss of Life & Limb in Massachusetts Workplaces

MASSCOSH & MASSACHUSETTS AFL-CIO

ISHN Exclusive

**FORMER OSHA CHIEF  
DR. DAVID MICHAELS:  
CLOSING OSHA OFFICES  
WILL INCREASE WORKER  
INJURIES, ILLNESSES, DEATH**

By Dr. David Michaels

ProPublica

**TRUMP LAID OFF NEARLY  
ALL THE FEDERAL WORKERS  
WHO INVESTIGATE  
FIREFIGHTER DEATHS**

STAT

**THE CDC'S CRITICAL  
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY  
INSTOTURE HAS BEEN  
VIRTUALLY WIPED OUT**

Star Tribune

**WORKER DIES AFTER  
AN EXCAVATOR IS BURIED  
UNDER ROCKS AT  
A MASSACHUSETTS QUARRY**

WCVB

**2 ELECTRICAL WORKERS  
HURT IN A MANHOLE  
INCIDENT OUTSIDE BELMONT  
HIGH SCHOOL**

USA Today

**TWO IMMIGRANTS  
DETAINED AT BOB'S TIRE  
IN NEW BEDFORD BY ICE  
TUESDAY, ACCORDING  
TO ADVOCATE**

WHDH

**WIDOW OF HIGHWAY WORKER  
KILLED IN TRIPE-FATAL CRASH  
ON I-91 CALLING FOR CHANGE**





*Oregon longshoreman Harry Stamper wrote this song after his boss asked him to put his life at risk one day on the docks. "Why don't you get in there?" shouted Harry's boss.*

*[Harry answered with an obscenity] Thanks to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Harry was able to appeal his firing and get his job back. It was later determined that Harry would have been killed if he had listened to his boss.*

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### **"We Just Come to Work Here, We Don't Come to Die"**

*By Harry Stamper, retired longshoreman and union activist*

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Well I've been working here for fifteen years  
and I've seen some changes come.  
I've seen some Okies called Californians,  
I've seen some poets called bums.  
I've seen people working for safety,  
there must be a reason why.  
Maybe we just come to work here,  
We don't come to die.

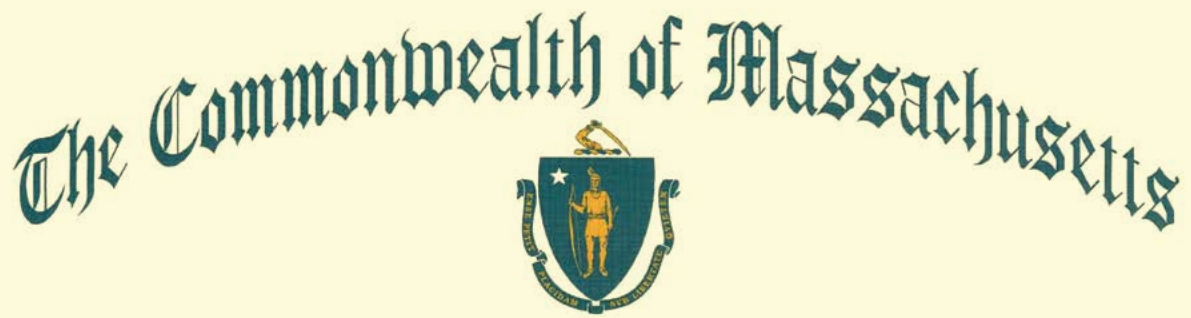
#### **Chorus:**

*"Cause if it's always level on the floor where you're working  
and your telephone is OSHA approved  
When you tell me how much you're spending on safety,  
pardon me if I'm not moved.  
Ever since 1970 the law has been on my side.  
And I just come to work here, I don't come to die.*

I would like to end up with all of my fingers,  
I don't want my brain to get numb  
I would like to have my ears when retirement nears,  
I wanna hear that applause come.  
And I'd like to see my grand-children...  
Be able to pick them up when they cry.  
That's why I just come to work here, I don't come to die.

Now I'll be the pitcher, and you can be the batter—  
you know that's just the old ball game.  
But when the line starts popping and that load starts dropping,  
our situation's not the same.  
And I'm not saying that you don't care...  
I'm not saying that you don't try  
I'm saying we just come to work here...  
We don't come to die.

Now you and I know that the things that aren't code  
could be fixed with relative ease.  
But we never did get anything by asking on our knees.  
So now we're looking you straight in the eye.  
Shoulder to shoulder and side by side.  
We're saying we just come to work here .....  
we don't come to die.  
We're saying we just come to work here MISTER!  
We don't come to die.



## *A Proclamation*

*Whereas, Thousands of workers across the country each year are affected by workplace injuries or occupational diseases; and*

*Whereas, Some become permanently disabled due to their workplace injury or are made ill; and*

*Whereas, Workers Memorial Day, on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, is observed to remember people who have passed away on the job or who were injured while working; and*

*Whereas, Massachusetts encourages all employers and employees to join together and renew our efforts to create safer workplaces; and*

*Whereas, It is paramount for all residents to continue to help workplaces maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone,*

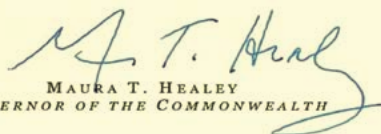
*Now, Therefore, I, Maura T. Healey, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to be*

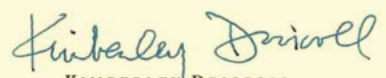
# WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY


*And urge all residents of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.*

*Given the Executive Chamber in Boston, this twenty-eight day of April, in the year two thousand and twenty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-eighth.*

BY HER EXCELLENCY

  
MAURA T. HEALEY  
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

  
KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL  
LT. GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

  
WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN  
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

*God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*



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# INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), in collaboration with the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, solemnly presents the **2025 Dying for Work: Loss of Life and Limb in Massachusetts Workplaces** report. The Massachusetts AFL-CIO, as the voice of over 750 local unions, joint boards, and district councils across the Commonwealth, joins forces with MassCOSH—an organization of workers, unions, youth, health and safety professionals, and advocates—united in the pursuit of one non-negotiable truth: every worker deserves to come home alive, healthy, and whole.

This year's report is more than a list of names, dates, and job titles. It is a reckoning. It is an excavation of grief. It is a record of the human cost of preventable harm—

fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, neighbors, and coworkers, each with dreams, histories, and loved ones, who were failed by systems that valued expedience and profit over protection.

In 2024, we continued to lose workers at an alarming rate. Their deaths were not tragic anomalies. They were the result of neglect, deregulation, insufficient oversight, and policies that fail to protect those who carry our economy forward. Behind every case is a story—raw, painful, and real—and in compiling this report, we have dwelled on the intricacies of those stories. We have listened to survivors, grieving families, and coworkers still traumatized. Their words form the heartbeat of this document.

We refuse to reduce these lives to data points. This report confronts the false narrative that workplace

death is an unavoidable consequence of labor. It is not. Each life lost is a policy failure, a leadership failure, and a moral failure. This report stands as both a memorial and a mandate for action.

We are deeply grateful to the families who opened their hearts and wounds to us, to the advocates and volunteers who gathered data and testimony, and to every voice that contributed to this painful but vital documentation. We carry the weight of these stories with reverence—and with outrage.

As we remember the fallen, we also fight for the living. Let this report be a catalyst: for stronger protections, for employer accountability, and for a Commonwealth where no worker has to die to earn a living.



A Message from the

# **PRESIDENT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS AFL-CIO**

Before the Occupational Safety and Health Act, there were no standards. Workers were just a commodity and their injuries and deaths were part of business. Still, each year, thousands of workers die on the job and millions more suffer injury or illness because of unacceptable and totally avoidable workplace conditions.

Workers' Memorial Day and the annual Dying for Work Report is an invaluable tool in the fight to end workplace death and injury. The report allows us to mourn and pray, but it also gives us something to commit to and fight for. It allows us to come together in a call for action to protect workers and renew the fight for stronger worker protections. Asking that every person comes home from work alive and healthy should not be too much to ask for. Today, we recommit ourselves to mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living.

In Solidarity,

**Chrissy Lynch**

*President, Massachusetts  
AFL-CIO*





**"MOURN FOR  
THE DEAD,  
FIGHT LIKE  
HELL FOR THE  
LIVING." -  
MOTHER  
JONES**





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*April 28, 2025 marks the 36<sup>th</sup> observance of Workers' Memorial Day. A day when we remember workers who were killed, made ill, or injured on the job. Every year at this time we reflect on tragedies of the past year and renew our commitment to the fight for safe and healthy jobs. With workers still getting sick and dying at alarming rates in Massachusetts, Workers' Memorial Day is an important reminder that many of us are still being put in dangerous situations. We offer this report as a call to action for the Commonwealth's workers, their families and allies.*

## The Toll: Workplace Deaths & Injuries in Massachusetts

Sixty Nine workers in Massachusetts lost their lives on the job in 2024. Forty of these workers died as a result of traumatic injuries suffered at work. An additional eight firefighters died from occupational related disease and 21 whose names we don't have died from overdose and suicide on the job. This does not reflect the true number of workers' lives lost as there is always underreporting of those who have died from occupational diseases. The government does not comprehensively track

occupational illness or the workers who die as a result.

Researchers have estimated that more than 20 times as many workers die from occupational diseases as from traumatic injuries. And even these numbers don't capture the full toll that injuries, the need to work in pain, and job stress take on working people in Massachusetts. Work-related suicides and drug overdoses seldom get counted as related to work.

However, fatal overdoses and suicides that occur on the job are

tracked; these alone claimed a troubling 21 lives in 2024.

Thanks to the efforts of the Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts to track data, we are able to include firefighter deaths from work-related illness because under the Massachusetts' Presumptive Disability Law, certain cancers and heart conditions are recognized as occupational in origin and are eligible for Workers' Compensation.

In the most recent year for which data sets are available,





2023, there were more than 69,300 recordable incidents of non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses in Massachusetts. Of these cases, 40,000 led to workers having to take days away from work, transfer jobs, or experience job restrictions. And these numbers, which are based on employer logs of incidents, are conservative estimates because many employers are not required to report or record all recordable injuries and illnesses.



## Who is dying from work?

In 2024, worker deaths in Massachusetts from fatal injuries were once again concentrated in the construction and excavation industry, with construction deaths accounting for almost half of the workers fatally injured on the job. After that, fatalities were concentrated in manufacturing, educational services and public administration which each accounted for 8% of workers fatally injured on the job.

The next highest concentrations of deaths came in the transportation and warehousing, healthcare and social assistance, and accommodation and food services, and other services (two workers killed on the job in each of these sectors). The complete breakdown of worker deaths by

sector and industry for 2024 can be found in page.

Of the Massachusetts workers fatally injured in 2024, 36 were men and 4 were women. Their average age was 54 years. The youngest worker killed was just 25 years old; the oldest was 81 years old.

Eight workers were immigrants, hailing from Brazil (three workers), Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, and China. Their deaths accounted for 20% of all occupational fatalities from injury in 2024.

Eight firefighters died from occupational illnesses in 2024, including from various cancers and cardiac arrest.



## What is killing them?

Falls, slips and trips were the leading cause of death from injuries in Massachusetts in 2024, contributing to 50% of all worker deaths from injuries. Workers also died from transportation incidents, which include motor vehicle crashes and workers

struck by vehicles or equipment (13 workers) and contact with objects or equipment (5 workers).

Violence or injury by another person resulted in the deaths of two workers in 2024.

A Message from the

# BOARD PRESIDENT

Each year, we release our Dying for Work report detailing those lives lost or injured due to avoidable workplace incidents. We put faces and names to the statistics, forcing us to remember this is more than numbers, these are families devastated by loss. We use the word accident; however, that's not accurate. These deaths can be attributed to employers failing to provide safe working conditions for their employees. After reviewing the data, we make recommendations to protect workers such as strengthening OSHA standards, passing legislation holding employers accountable, or increasing protection for workers who bring forward complaints. This year hits even harder as we watch the federal administration weakening worker protections and rolling back standards. We already read too many names on Workers' Memorial Day, and the Executive Orders rolling out of Washington will put more workers in danger.

Every Workers' Memorial Day, we make a call to action. We ask people to advocate for better working conditions. This is about using our collective power to make real change. This year I am calling on each of you to make the decision to take one action to improve working conditions – at your own workplace, at your child's school, passing by a worksite that doesn't look safe, or writing testimony for legislation. If we all engage and protect each other, imagine what we can accomplish in spite of cuts to worker safety protections. Join me so that one day we can celebrate our accomplishments instead of mourning those we lost. As you read this report, think about who you will share this report with and what actions you can take. Make a plan, reach out to us to learn more about how you can support our work, and most importantly, use this valuable resource to make change.

In solidarity,

**Elissa Cadillac**

*Board President, MassCOSH*



## IN MEMORIAM 2024-2025

*Listed below are the dozens of people who died from work-related causes in 2024 and in the first three months of 2025. Eight firefighters who died from documented work-related illness are included in this list. For the hundreds more workers in other sectors who likely died this year from occupational diseases, we have no names. No government agency collects comprehensive data about these individuals and no database contains their information. We don't know who these fallen workers were, or under what conditions they passed, but we honor them all.*

### 2024

#### **Fredrika Ballard**

53, Leyden - 01/14/2024  
Flight School Owner/Operator,

#### **William Hampton**

68, Leyden - 01/14/2024  
Flight Instructor

#### **Karen Johnson**

54, Worcester - 01/18/2024  
Registered Nurse

#### **Jason Coughlin**

42, Salem - 01/20/2024  
Sprinkler Fitter

#### **Brian Dussault**

45, Fall River - 01/27/2024  
Oil Burner Technician

#### **Michael Potter**

54, Chicopee - 01/27/2024  
Carpenter

#### **Gabriel Santiago**

42, Hingham - 01/28/2024  
Roofer

#### **Gercier De Faria**

51, Hanson - 02/7/2024  
Construction Laborer

#### **Brian Wideman**

45, Burlington - 02/18/2024  
Retail Team Lead

#### **Raymond Mello**

59, Saugus - 02/22/2024  
Real Estate Appraiser

#### **Helen Murgida**

81, Newburyport - 02/28/2024  
Minister



The Roadmap To Justice:

# NUMBERS BEHIND THE FACES

*Honoring 69 lives lost in Massachusetts and transforming grief into advocacy.*

*Forty workers lost their lives to work-related injuries in Massachusetts in 2024, demonstrating that egregious practices and preventable deaths are still occurring. We must continue to push for adequate safety measures and consequences for employers that fail to comply so that all workers can return home safely to their families.*



We've also included eight documented occupational illnesses in 2024. This number does not reflect the true number of workers' lives lost to work-related illnesses, since so many of these are not diagnosed, recorded or reported. This is a toll we may never truly know. Work-related illnesses are estimated to kill more than 20 times as many workers who die from workplace traumatic injuries in the United States every year. Despite the magnitude of that number, there is no comprehensive documentation of these workers or the illnesses that kill them. We are able to include firefighter occupational disease data thanks to the efforts of the Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Presumptive Disability Law.

Names are not included for another 21 workers who died on the job from fatal overdoses and/or suicides. This number may increase as additional cases are often identified as data is analyzed in more detail. It's worth noting that these numbers do not include deaths of workers who die as a result of suicide or overdose elsewhere but whose deaths may be linked to previous workplace injuries, pain, and stressful working conditions.

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
<b>WORKPLACE FATALITIES</b>	48	62	51	62	45
<b>RATES (DEATHS PER 100,000 EMPLOYEES)*</b>	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.8	1.0
<b>WORKPLACE SUICIDE FATALITIES</b>	10	19	9	13	5
<b>WORKPLACE OVERDOSE FATALITIES</b>	11	24	16	25	18

\*Includes only fatal workplace injuries, not occupational illnesses.



## WORKER DEATHS

*by Event or Exposure*

DEATHS BY OVERDOSE OR SUICIDE

TRANSPORTATION INCIDENTS

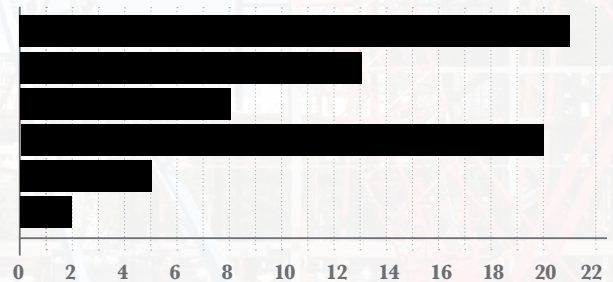
OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS (firefighters only)

FALLS, SLIPS, TRIPS

CONTACT WITH OBJECTS INJURIES BY PERSONS

VIOLENCE & OTHERS INJURIES BY PERSONS

**TOTAL FATALITIES IN 2024: 69**



## CONSTRUCTION & EXCAVATION:

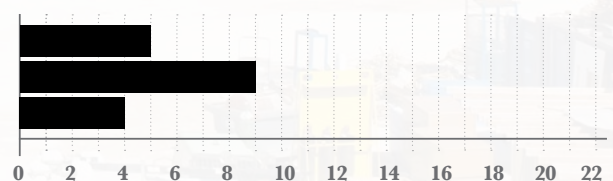
*A Deadly Industry in Massachusetts*

TRANSPORTATION INCIDENT

FALLS, SLIPS, TRIPS

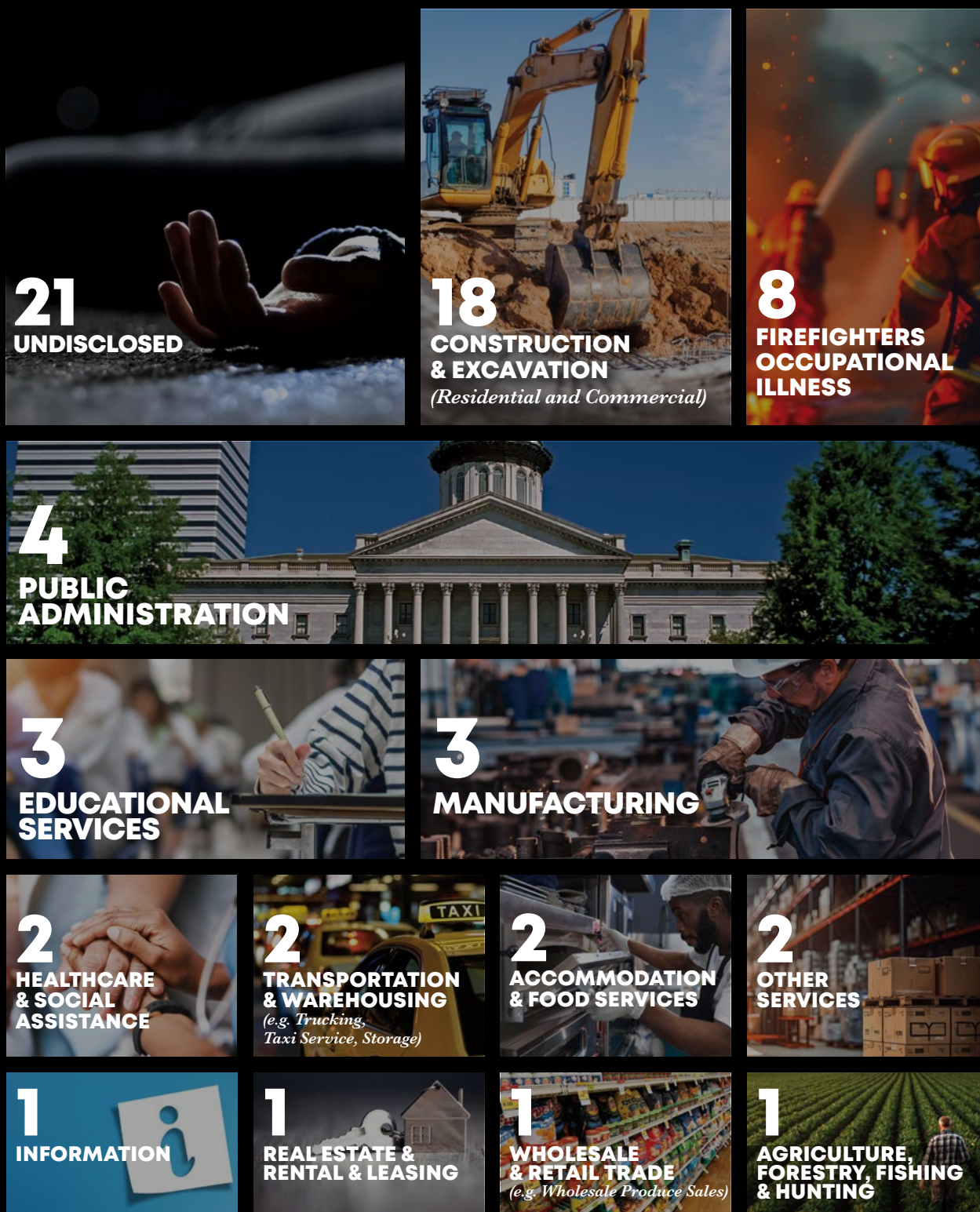
CONTACT WITH OBJECTS OR EQUIPMENT

**TOTAL FATALITIES IN 2024: 18**





# FATAL INJURIES BY SECTOR/INDUSTRY



# OSHA ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY IN 2024

In 2024, OSHA imposed substantial fines on many Massachusetts firms who willfully ignored regulations, putting their workers at serious risk. OSHA has the ability to issue citations including “other than serious,” “serious,” “willful,” and “repeat”. A willful violation is considered to be the most serious violation under the laws administered by OSHA. It occurs when an

employer knows that a hazardous situation exists and makes no reasonable attempt to eliminate it. The range of fines started at \$1,190 for a “serious” violation and reached a maximum of up to \$161,323 for each “repeat” violation.

Most of the hazards that led to these severe injuries/deaths are easily preventable. We know

that, in most cases, employers can stop them in cost-effective ways, such as by providing fall protection equipment, lockout/tagout devices on dangerous machinery, or the appropriate personal protective equipment. In 2024 OSHA conducted 1,676 inspections, found 897 violations and issued citations of \$30,000 or more to 69 companies in Massachusetts.

## JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> TO DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2024

Number of cases closed in 2024:

**865** out of **1676** inspections closed

Percent reduction from proposed to final penalty value:

**45.9%**

Percent of violations that were serious, willful, or repeat:

**67.9%**

For closed cases, the average **final** penalty:

**\$10,142.21**

For closed cases, the average **proposed** penalty:

**\$5,485.43**

## OSHA PENALTIES ISSUE

for Employers of Workers Who Died on the Job in Massachusetts

**12** inspections opened in response to **14** worker deaths

**5** closed inspections, and **7** ongoing & open inspections

**4** closed inspections led to some penalty for the employer

Percent reduction from proposed to final penalty value:

**32.5%**

For closed cases, the average **final** penalty:

**\$46,450** lowest \$700 highest \$176,000

For closed cases, the average **proposed** penalty:

**\$68,816** lowest \$3,457 highest \$251,467

Note: The dollar amount in the “average proposed penalty” and the “average final penalty” categories do not include cases that are not yet settled, in which employers are contesting their OSHA citations/fines, or are in the 15 day period during which they must decide whether to pay or contest their OSHA citations/fines.





Our Collective Responsibility:

# FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF SAFE & HEALTHY WORKPLACES

*Each year on **Workers' Memorial Day**, we gather not only to mourn the lives lost on the job—but to re-dedicate ourselves to the unfinished fight for safe, dignified, and equitable workplaces for all. We remember the 69 workers who lost their lives in Massachusetts over the past year, not as statistics, but as loved ones—mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, co-workers, and community members. Their absence is a call to action. Their memory demands progress.*

*At a time when science is under siege, safety standards are eroding, and worker protections are being dismantled at the federal level, we must push forward boldly—here in Massachusetts. The need is urgent, and the solutions are clear. The promise of safe jobs and healthy communities is not an aspiration—it is a **human right**.*

## What Massachusetts Must Do to Lead & Protect

The Massachusetts State Plan for Public Employees, housed under the Department of Labor Standards (DLS), is a critical advancement. But progress without investment falters. We must increase funding to DLS to hire and train investigators,

improve oversight, and enforce retaliation protections. Public employees—from sanitation workers to educators and school custodians to healthcare workers and groundskeepers—deserve the same safety and accountability as those in private industry.

## IN MEMORIAM 2024-2025

### **Nancy Moyer**

68, Dennis - 04/03/2024 - Firefighter

### **Anthony Junior Lopez**

30, Framingham - 04/20/2024 - Cook

### **Thomas Kilduff**

67, Uxbridge - 04/20/2024  
Shipping Clerk

### **Ian Taylor**

49, Billerica - 04/26/2024  
Police Officer

### **Alacrino Dias**

68, Franklin - 05/01/2024  
Cook

### **William Smith**

81, Baldwinville - 05/14/2024  
Custodian

### **Matthew Troy**

32, Boston - 06/12/2024  
Firefighter

### **William Carrazzo**

70, Plymouth - 06/20/2024  
Mechanic

### **Paul Downes**

70, Hull - 6/24/2024 - Delivery Driver

### **Luis Sanchez Bencosme**

36, Seekonk - 07/02/2024  
Sales Worker

### **Edy Cujcuy Yool**

25, Marlborough - 07/17/2024  
Construction Laborer

### **Jean Revil**

67, Fall River - 07/17/2024  
Donated Goods Mover,

### **David Sousa**

57, West Bridgewater - 07/27/2024  
Highway Maintenance Foreman

### **Barry Medeiros**

43, Boston - 08/09/2024  
Construction Laborer

### **Mark D'Antonio**

66, Wellesley - 08/09/2024  
General Contractor

### **Matthew Forand**

45, New Bedford - 08/15/2024  
Firefighter

### **John Dunnet**

66, Peabody - 08/16/2024  
Carpenter

### **Nicholas**

### **Charles Costantino**

36, Blandford - 08/16/2024  
Truck Driver

# Step Up Where Federal OSHA Falls Short

Employers must be held accountable. We need enforceable standards that go beyond education and awareness. Safety must be a mandate—not a suggestion. When federal agencies are being decimated or eliminated, protections and enforcement lag, Massachusetts has the authority—and the moral imperative—to act. The Commonwealth must establish its own safeguards for:

**INFECTIOUS DISEASE EXPOSURE**  
in all sectors, not just healthcare;

**ERGONOMIC HAZARDS**  
like repetitive strain and overexertion

**EXTREME HEAT AND COLD,**  
especially for construction,  
agriculture, and gig workers

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE,**  
which disproportionately affects women, caregivers,  
and healthcare, education and retail workers

## Legislative Action at the State House

### PROTECT CANNABIS WORKERS

Massachusetts's cannabis industry is booming, but many workers face hazardous exposure to chemicals, mold, and violence—often in silence. The Cannabis Control Commission must be empowered with enforcement tools and health and safety personnel to protect workers. No one should have to risk their life on a daily basis for a job in this industry.

*Support H.194 An Act relative to the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission forming a department of workplace and consumer safety*

### STOP PUBLIC DOLLARS FROM FUNDING DANGEROUS EMPLOYERS

Contractors with a record of safety violations should not be awarded public contracts or trenching permits. The Commonwealth must require transparency and reject partnerships that endanger lives.

*Support S.1323/H.2096 An Act relative to workplace safety and disclosure of violations*

### END RETALIATION AGAINST INJURED WORKERS

Workers who report injuries or hazards often face retaliation that delays care and justice. Massachusetts must adopt an administrative complaint mechanism, increase funding to the Attorney General's Office, and hold employers accountable for coercive or discriminatory practices.

*Support S.1310/H.2151 An Act to protect injured workers*

### DEFEND YOUNG WORKERS FROM EXPLOITATION

As other states roll back child labor protections, Massachusetts must lead with integrity. We must remain vigilant in enforcing child labor laws and ensuring that young workers have the knowledge, support, and legal protection they need to thrive safely.

*Support S.1196/H.1744 An Act to prevent child labor exploitation and trafficking*

### GUARANTEE FAIR COMPENSATION

Wage theft is violence. It robs workers of dignity, sustenance, and trust. We must clarify responsibility, strengthen enforcement, and expand the Attorney General's ability to recoup stolen wages—especially from repeat offenders.

*Support S.1300/H.2094 An Act preventing wage theft, promoting employer accountability, & enhancing public enforcement.*





## Confronting Today's Realities: Climate, Schools, & Solidarity

### PROTECT WORKERS FROM THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Extreme heat and cold are no longer seasonal inconveniences—they are occupational hazards. We must pass legislation requiring that employers mitigate heat and cold stress through hydration, breaks, shade, and temperature monitoring.

*Support H.3995 An Act to Protect Workers from Extreme Temperatures*

### ENSURE SAFE, HEALTHY, AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT SCHOOLS

Massachusetts must fully embrace the Green New Deal for Schools. Our children, educators, and school staff deserve buildings that are fossil fuel-free, well-ventilated, and designed for health equity. Clean air isn't a privilege—it's a prerequisite for learning and life.

*Support S.2275/H.3476 An Act relative to healthy and sustainable schools*

### EMBRACE GREEN JOBS AND A JUST TRANSITION

Massachusetts must support efforts to combat the effects of climate change. Our communities must have netzero emissions and create jobs that contribute to the green economy but not sacrifice the livelihoods of union workers and safe jobs. These two issues can be resolved collectively by promoting legislation that promotes cleaner energy and a just transition for workers in these industries.

*Support S.2276/H.3475 An Act promoting a just transition and clean energy workforce standards & S.2300/H.3531 An Act providing for natural gas workforce safety*

## IN MEMORIAM 2024-2025

### Brian Derby

67, Sterling - 08/22/2024  
Heavy Equipment Operator

### Carl Varrell

76, Marblehead - 08/25/2024  
Police Officer

### Edward Seligman

69, Swampscott - 09/04/2024  
Firefighter

### Cristian Diaz Mejia

27, New Bedford - 09/06/2024  
Construction Laborer

### Jason Gould

46, Brockton - 09/08/2024  
Firefighter

### Jerome McGee

60, Brockton - 09/11/2024  
House Painter

### Enrique

### Delgado-Garcia

25, New Braintree - 09/13/2024  
Police Recruit

### Samuel Epstein

49, Billerica - 09/24/2024  
Chemical Engineer

### Fredrick True

77, Wrentham - 10/01/2024  
Police Officer

### Reynaldo Martinez

25, Leominster - 10/07/2024  
Commercial Painter

### Charles Fronk

60, Braintree - 10/11/2024  
Truck Driver

### Darwin Morocho

33, Plymouth - 10/15/2024  
Construction Laborer

### Michael Buckley

58, Malden - 10/18/2024  
Firefighter

### Celso Dias

37, Methuen - 11/02/2024  
Carpenter

### Kenny Milanez

41, Methuen - 11/02/2024  
Carpenter

### James Harrington

78, Charlton - 11/19/2024  
Logger

### Richard Gillis

55, Brookline - 12/04/2024  
Firefighter



## Restorative Justice, Dignity, & Equity

### PASS THE CLEAN SLATE ACT

Everyone deserves a second chance. The Clean Slate Campaign seeks to automatically seal and expunge old criminal records—removing barriers to housing, education, and employment. This is especially vital for workers returning from incarceration who deserve the opportunity to work, heal, and thrive. A past mistake should not be a life sentence to poverty, marginalization, or exploitation.

*Support S.1114/H.1811 An Act requiring clean slate automated record sealing*

### PROTECT MASSACHUSETTS FARM WORKERS

Farm workers are among the most exploited laborers in our state—enduring exposure to pesticides, extreme weather, and grueling hours, often without basic labor protections. Massachusetts must finally pass legislation to guarantee minimum wage, overtime, collective bargaining rights, and safety standards for those who feed us. Food justice cannot exist without worker justice.

*Support S.2012/H.2108 An Act establishing fairness for agricultural laborers in Massachusetts*

## Empowerment Through Organizing & Youth Leadership

### UPHOLD THE RIGHT TO UNIONIZE & STRIKE

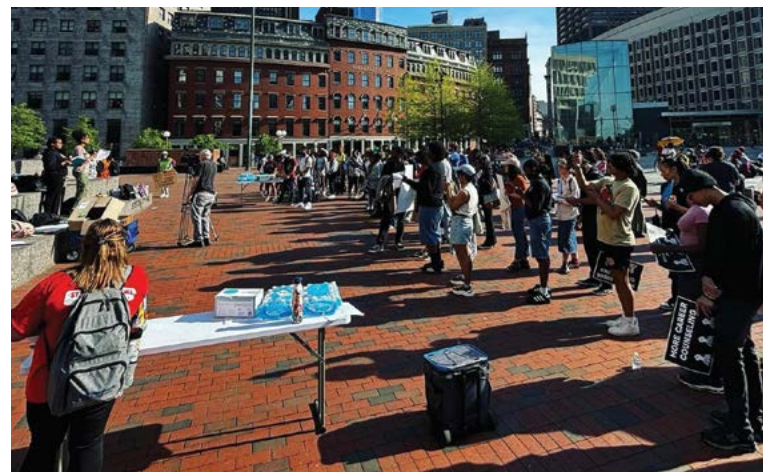
Unionized workplaces are safer workplaces. Collective bargaining leads to safer staffing, fair hours, and meaningful input into job conditions. We must protect workers' right to organize and challenge union-busting tactics at every level.

*Support S.1343/H.2093 An Act relative to collective bargaining rights for legislative employees, S.1334/H.2111 An Act uplifting families & securing the right to strike for certain public employees & S.1873 An Act relative to the collective bargaining rights for employees of the committee for public counsel services*

### INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

MassCOSH's Teens Lead @ Work (TL@W) program trains youth peer leaders to identify exploitation, navigate their rights, and protect themselves and their peers from harm. Over 450 youth across Greater Boston have been trained in just the last year alone—planting the seeds of lifelong advocacy and self-determination. We must advocate for municipal and state budget line items that increase funds for youth jobs and apprenticeship programs.

*Support S.2148/H.3375 An Act utilizing apprenticeship programs for career paths in construction & S.1303/H.2085 An Act providing opportunities for apprentices to complete their training and ensuring for a skilled workforce in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*







# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational  
Safety and Health (MassCOSH)

**Each year, this report breaks our hearts.**

Dying for Work is not just a title—it is a national disgrace. Behind every line in this document lies a life cut short, a family shattered, a future stolen not by fate, but by failure—failure to protect, to prioritize, to act. There is nothing accidental about workers dying on the job. These deaths are not tragic coincidences—they are preventable, predictable outcomes of neglect, exploitation, and systemic disregard for human life.

This year, we face an unconscionable unraveling of protections. With the federal dismantling of NIOSH and a blatant disregard for OSHA standards, we are witnessing an assault not just on workplace safety—but on dignity itself. This is not policy; this is betrayal. And the cost is being paid in blood, in broken bones, in grieving families burying their loved ones while Washington looks the other way.

In 2024, 69 Massachusetts workers didn't make it home. Some bore these injuries in silence, afraid to speak up. Others were young, just beginning their lives. The pain doesn't end with the worker—it ripples through our neighborhoods, our schools, our families. A dead worker casts no vote, pays no taxes, raises no children, and builds no future. When we fail to protect our workers, we don't just lose lives—we erode the very foundation of our economy and our humanity.

At MassCOSH, we refuse to let these deaths be ignored. Our small but fierce team has trained nearly a thousand workers in the past year alone—providing life-saving tools, education, and a community of support. We've pushed forward policies, built coalitions, and trained the next generation of youth leaders to fight for the rights they deserve.

But we cannot do this alone. This year, I ask you to feel the weight of these names. Let them haunt you into action. Whether you are an employer, legislator, union member, educator, or community leader—your silence will not shield you from the consequences of inaction. You have a role. You have a responsibility.

So I ask you—what will you do with your outrage?

Will you join us in this fight? Will you stand with us when it's inconvenient? Will you write, testify, vote, and intervene? Will you advocate, not when it's politically safe, but when it's morally urgent?

**We do not need sympathy. We need courage to rise to the occasion. We need a policy that solidifies UNITY. We need protection for ALL WORKERS. We need prevention for ALL.**

And above all—we need the political will to value a worker's life more than a corporation's bottom line.

Let this report not be a eulogy but a rallying cry.

In rage, in hope, and solidarity,

**Tatiana Sofia Begault**  
*Executive Director*

## IN MEMORIAM 2024-2025

### Jeffrey Albanese

49, Brockton - 12/21/2024  
Firefighter

### Tony Nan

61, Holyoke - 12/25/2024  
HVAC Installer

## 2025

### Mark Stomski

53, Worcester - 01/12/2025  
Firefighter

### Samuel Mooskian

72, Everett - 01/18/2025  
Retail Worker

### Matthew Nedorostek

66, Greenfield - 01/24/2025  
Concrete Plant Worker

### Weslei Seibel

46, Boston - 01/26/2025  
Car Rental Employee

### Mario Diaz Obando

29, Weymouth - 01/28/2025  
Construction Worker

### Jose Luis

### Collaguazo Crespo

32, Edgartown - 02/11/2025  
Construction Worker

### Michael Sarnie

60, Taunton - 02/17/2025  
Tree Worker

### Richard Mattson

39, Taunton - 03/01/2025  
Equipment Operator

### Rafael Cardoso Martins

23, Fall River - 03/04/2025  
Construction Worker

### Ryan Almeida

48, West Springfield - 03/28/2025  
Construction Worker

### Raul Bohorquez

57, West Springfield - 03/28/2025  
Construction Worker

### Igor Costa

26, West Springfield - 03/28/2025  
Construction Worker

### Mario

### Da Paixao Andrade

48, Harwich - 04/03/2025  
Painter



# A FINAL CALL TO ACTION

We cannot afford to wait.

Not while workers are still dying.

Not while young people are entering a workforce  
that too often fails to protect them.

Not while injustice hides behind bureaucracy and profit.

We have the data.

We have the stories.

We have the solutions.

What we need now is **the collective power**.

Let today be the day we turn remembrance into resistance.

Let today be the day we organize, legislate, educate, and  
build the future we deserve.

**Let us honor the dead—not with words alone,  
but with action bold enough to protect the living.**







Massachusetts Needs to Step Up –

# OSHA UNDER ATTACK

*The Occupational Safety and Health Administration covers private sector workers in Massachusetts, but has serious limitations. Under the Trump Administration, OSHA is expected to become even more undermined, understaffed, under-funded and under attack. We need to reverse this national assault on workers' health and safety, but in the meantime, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has an important role to play in protecting workers in Massachusetts.*

*The Commonwealth has the power to significantly expand health and safety protections for all Massachusetts workers – but is currently not using it. The Massachusetts OSHA state plan now provides some essential protections to state, county and municipal workers. But Massachusetts could do much more. Now, when the federal government is expected to pull back on enacting new protections and enforcing federal laws and regulations, it is critical that the state step up and use all of its power to protect our workers.*

## What can the Commonwealth do?

- Many serious hazards that lead to workers' injuries, illnesses and death are not currently regulated by the federal government and could be regulated by states. The Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards (DLS) could develop and enforce regulations to protect all workers in the Commonwealth – public and private sector – from the following and other unsafe/unhealthy conditions:

- Extreme heat & other extreme weather conditions;
- Poor ergonomic conditions such as repetitive motion work and heavy lifting;
- Workplace violence;
- Infectious diseases
- Poor indoor air quality

- The state can use its contracting power to give preference to businesses with good safety records, and to exclude businesses with histories of injuries and fatalities. The City of Boston has an ordinance in place that requires a good OSHA record for construction. It is time to develop a more detailed, comprehensive, statewide plan to use the state's purchasing power to promote the health and safety of workers.



- If employers engage in serious and willful misconduct resulting in worker injury, compensation may be doubled. But this is a rare occurrence. The Massachusetts legislature should amend the workers' compensation statute to allow for civil lawsuits and punitive damages when employers have shown reckless disregard for the safety of their workers.
- Employers also face very little risk for retaliating against workers who raise concerns about safety or who file workers' compensation claims. Federal law providing protection against retaliation is weak and is unlikely to be enforced aggressively in the coming period. Workers need far better protection and employers need to be held accountable when they retaliate. To that end, the Protect Injured Workers Act [SB1310, HB2151 #], currently pending in the legislature, must be passed and signed into law.



Climate Change & Extreme Weather Events –

# NEW WORKPLACE HAZARDS IN A CHANGING WORLD

*This last summer, the Biden administration proposed a new federal heat standard for OSHA, taking a long overdue step towards protecting workers from extreme heat events in the wake of climate change. Unfortunately, this standard was not finalized before Trump took office, at which time he swiftly issued a “Regulatory Freeze” on “all executive departments and agencies,” including OSHA.*



There is still a public hearing scheduled for June 16<sup>th</sup> to provide public comment on this proposed new standard, for which National COSH has been mobilizing workers across the country. However, between the regulatory freeze, the closure of

many regional OSHA offices (including the pending closure of the Boston North office in Andover), and the significant staffing cuts to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), we as a country are already seeing the

disregard Trump is showing towards the health and safety of our nation’s workforce. Even under administrations more amenable to OSHA’s mission and goals, new workplace standards take many years to finalize.



The need for a federal heat standard is more critical than ever before. According to data collected and compiled by the EPA to monitor the impacts of climate change, average temperatures across the United States have risen roughly 60% since 1970. The International Institute for Environment and Development has documented extreme heat trends among the 50 most populated cities in the United States over the past five decades. In their research, they have found that the average number of days with extreme

heat per city has risen from 21 to 37. In a United Nations report, it was also revealed that the last decade was Earth's hottest ever, with global carbon dioxide levels now reaching an 800,000-year high. Unsurprisingly, given all this information, extreme heat has been the leading cause of weather-related deaths in the United States for the last 30+ years, per data collected by the National Weather Service.

With these record-breaking temperatures, workers are put at significantly greater risk of heat-related illness and injury. From 1992 to 2022, we know of 986 workers in the United States who have died from heat exposure, though this number is almost certainly higher, with many worker fatalities not getting properly reported or attributed to heat-related illness or injury. For low-income people, immigrants, and people of color, the risk of death from occupational heat exposure is even greater, with America's lowest-paid workers having five times as many heat-related injuries on the job as their highest-paid workers. According to a study by NPR from 2021, Latinos have comprised one third of all heat-related worker fatalities in the United States since 2010.

While extreme heat poses its own occupational risks, there are other serious weather events stemming from climate change that increasingly impact the health and safety of workers. With the rise in global temperatures, we are also seeing more tropical storms and floods. In the summer of 2023, flash floods hit western Massachusetts, with some roads being reportedly flooded with water at more than 19 feet of depth. In Tennessee, meanwhile, six employees of Impact Plastics

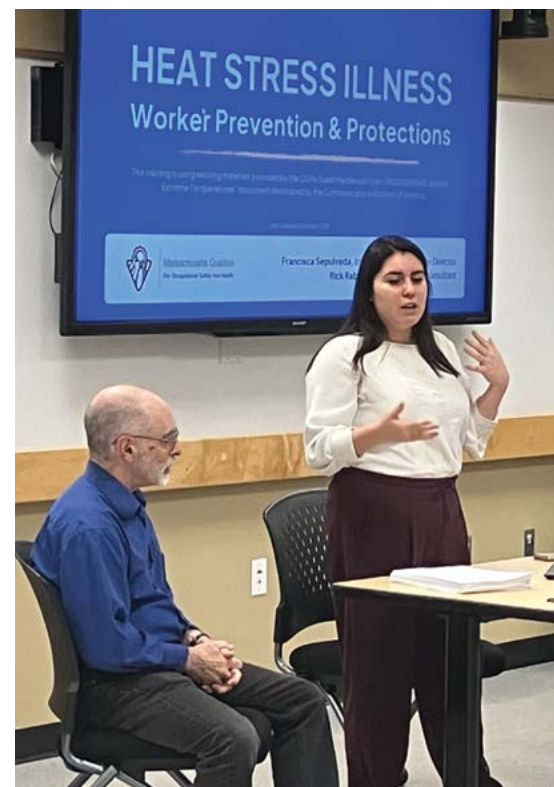


Inc. were killed last September after they were washed away by floodwaters from Hurricane Helene.

As a commonwealth, we are also seeing an increase in droughts. This last October, Massachusetts was hit with unprecedented wildfires while the majority of the state hovered between Level 2 - Significant Drought and Level 3 - Critical Drought conditions. According to the Massachusetts Drought Management plan, "At Drought Level 3, many sectors, community functions, and environmental resources are facing critical strain." This is certainly an accurate depiction of conditions in October, when Massachusetts saw a 1200% increase in wildfires over the yearly average, with nearly 200 wildfires.

Unfortunately, Massachusetts is not the only state that has been dealing with unprecedented drought conditions. In January of this year, southern California was hit with 14 devastating wildfires

that forced the evacuation of more than 200,000 people, burned over 57,000 acres, destroyed more than 18,000 buildings, and killed at least 30 people. In North and South Carolina, meanwhile, wildfires struck hard last month, with the Table Rock Fire Complex burning nearly 16,000 acres. To address the wildfire crisis in southern California, more than





7500 firefighters and emergency personnel were deployed, including from other states, calling attention to the fact that many of these natural disasters, while local in origin, have impacts that are far greater.

With all of these extreme weather events, firefighters and other first responders face increasing occupational hazards as they fight on the frontlines against the many impacts of climate change. According to data collected by the CDC, “More than 400 on-duty wildland firefighting fatalities occurred in the United States from 2000-2019.” In this very report, we recognize and mourn the loss of eight Massachusetts firefighters who died from occupational illness in 2024. As the number of wildfires increases, so too does the risk of occupational illness from smoke exposure to firefighters and first responders.



## In light of the occupational dangers presented by climate change, it is imperative that:

- OSHA establish an emergency federal heat standard while they work to implement a permanent one,
- Massachusetts establish its own heat standard that protects public and private sector workers,
- Firefighters and first responders receive the resources and training they need to safely do their job, and
- Employers create emergency response plans for extreme weather incidents.

Hurting Worker Protection Enforcement –

# THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S IMMIGRATION CRACKDOWN

*Immigrants make up 21.95 of Massachusetts's labor force and support the state's economy in many ways. They account for 27.0% of entrepreneurs, 29.35 of STEM workers, and 38.65 of health aides in the state. As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Massachusetts's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all of us.*



The presence of a significant number of unauthorized immigrants in the United States, most of whom have lived in the country for more than five years, has for decades posed legal and political challenges. But the reality is that millions of unauthorized immigrants are working across the country, contributing billions of dollars to the U.S. economy and providing needed expertise, labor and services, often filling jobs that are poorly paid, dangerous and difficult.

More than 150,000 unauthorized immigrants live in Massachusetts, and almost 87% are of working age. With household income of almost \$6 billion, they paid close to \$1.5 billion in state and federal taxes.

Where unauthorized workers are concerned, there has long been a tension between the enforcement of immigration law, on the one hand, and of worker protection laws, on the other. Immigrant



workers who aren't authorized to be in the U.S., and thus lack authorization to work here, have for decades been subject to adverse immigration action, including possible deportation.

At the same time, all workers in the U.S., regardless of immigration status, are entitled to the benefits of many of its laws, including laws governing wages

and hours, health and safety on the job, anti-discrimination, and the right to organize for a union. But when workers fear the threat of deportation, unscrupulous employers often take advantage by subjecting them to wage theft, unsafe conditions, harassment, and worse. And not surprisingly, when workers reasonably fear employer retaliation -- including calls to ICE (Immigration and



Customs Enforcement) – they endure the illegal conditions. This harms the workers, in obvious ways, increases unsafe conditions for other workers, who may be authorized, and also law-abiding employers, who are put at a competitive disadvantage.

During the Biden administration, the Department of Homeland Security made clear that it was not targeting unauthorized workers, and went further. It rolled out a process (“DALE,” deferred action for labor enforcement) under which worker protection enforcement agencies – federal, state, and local – could write letters in support of immigration relief for unauthorized workers whose employers were subject to labor agency investigations. That immigration relief enabled unauthorized workers to stay in this country for four years (or more, with extensions), so that they could be available to assist government agencies in providing evidence of hazardous working conditions. Importantly, the program also granted them work authorization.

As many as 10,000 previously unauthorized workers have benefited from this program, empowering them to speak out about unsafe and other illegal conditions -- since the threat of deportation had been eliminated, for four years at least. Among those who obtained DALE were many Massachusetts workers – their access to this program facilitated by worker centers like MassCOSH’s, Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores, the Brazilian Worker Center, Metrowest Worker Center, and others, with assistance from legal non-profits like Justice at Work and Greater Boston Legal Services.

Unfortunately, the future of this program is dim at best. Overall, Trump’s Homeland Security chief, Tom Homan, has indicated that every unauthorized immigrant in this country is a target for ICE enforcement, and immigrant-friendly Massachusetts is clearly in his crosshairs. In recent weeks, ICE conducted workplace raids in New Bedford, Chelsea, and other immigrant-heavy communities, striking fear in families and neighborhoods across the Commonwealth.

We should prepare for more of this in the weeks to come. Worker centers across the state will be making every effort to deliver know-your-rights trainings that workers need, as well as counseling on the risks they face. We hope that OSHA and other U.S. Labor Department agencies will continue to enforce the laws they’re responsible for, including protections for, and without harm to, unauthorized workers. We will advocate forcefully that they uphold those obligations. We will also be looking for support from state agencies like the Attorney General’s office, that has made clear that it enforces the Commonwealth’s worker rights laws for the benefit of all employees.



**There has been so much work done to create awareness and comfortability for these workers to speak up and we know it takes a lot of courage to make changes to their working conditions. These decisions mean workers will no longer be able to raise their voices and concerns about unsafe workplaces. It does nothing but create an environment of fear and will be detrimental, not only to their own health and safety, but also of their colleagues, who they no longer are willing to stand up for.**

**Francisca Sepulveda**  
*MassCOSH Immigrant  
Worker Center*





Massachusetts Coalition  
For Occupational Safety And Health



# Know Your Rights!



Regardless of immigration status, you have the right to:

A healthy &  
Safe workplace

A workplace free  
from discrimination

Receive workers' comp  
when injured on the job

Be paid at least  
the minimum wage

Be paid for  
all the hours  
you work

Use paid  
sick time

Talk & organize  
with your co-workers

Submit claims to a government  
agency when your employer  
doesn't follow the law

Do any of these things without retaliation!

When ICE comes to your work, you have the right to:

## Deny Access to Private Spaces

ICE cannot enter non-public areas of a workplace without a judicial warrant signed by a judge. A warrant issued by ICE (administrative warrant) is not sufficient to authorize entry into private areas.

## Remain Silent

You have the right to remain silent and are not required to answer questions about immigration status or provide documentation.

## Representation

You have the right to ask for an attorney if detained or questioned.

## Protection from Retaliation

Employers cannot retaliate against employees for asserting their legal rights, such as refusing to answer ICE's questions or declining to provide information.

## Protection from Verification Requests

Employers should not allow ICE to review employee records without a judicial warrant or a subpoena. The I-9 audit process must follow proper legal procedures, and employees must be informed if ICE requests their records.





Not One More:

# A CALL TO PREVENT SUICIDE & OPIOID DEATHS IN THE WORKFORCE

*Every year, we gather on Workers' Memorial Day, and we share the "Dying for Work Report" to remember those lost to workplace fatalities. We read their names, hold candles, and speak about safety. But what remains in the shadows—often buried under bureaucracy and stigma—are the thousands of workers who die not from falling scaffolds or equipment failures but from suicide and opioid overdoses.*

*Let us be clear: these are also work-related deaths. And they demand a response just as urgent, just as powerful, and just as deeply rooted in policy reform, compassion, and prevention.*

**"We are not just losing workers — we are losing fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and friends. This is not a crisis of productivity. It is a crisis of humanity."**

## The Data Behind the Crisis

The U.S. workforce is facing a mental health and addiction emergency, and the numbers are alarming:

- Suicide is the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S. overall, but among working-age adults (25-54), it ranks even higher.
- According to the CDC, more than 49,000 people died by suicide in 2022, the highest number ever recorded. A disproportionate number were employed full-time, often in high-stress, high-risk, or undervalued occupations.
- The construction industry has the highest suicide rate of any occupational group—at over 53 per 100,000 workers, nearly four times the national average.
- Workers in mining, agriculture, transportation, healthcare, manufacturing, food service, firefighting, and law enforcement also show elevated risk due to job strain, long hours, exposure to trauma, job insecurity, and stigma around seeking help.
- Opioid overdose—particularly from synthetic opioids like fentanyl—has become a leading cause of work-related deaths, especially for those in physically demanding or extremely dangerous jobs.
- Massachusetts adults who were injured on the job were more likely to die of an opioid related overdose than adults who never sustained a work injury. And, they were likely to die at a younger age than those who died from other causes.
- A 2020 National Safety Council Report found that 75% of our workforce have been impacted by Opioids and co-occurring disorders, and the negative unintended consequences that impact both sides of the work line, the employer and community are significantly impacted.



## Massachusetts Is No Exception – And Construction Is the Epicenter

In Massachusetts, construction workers are dying at staggering rates. In 2023 alone, 37 fatalities were recorded when including overdose and suicide. The tragic pattern continues in 2024, with 17 traumatic injury deaths already this year and at least 3 overdose-

or suicide-related deaths expected while final statistics are released.

If employers do not address this as a workforce-wide epidemic, they are simply complicit in the quiet erasure of suffering that lives behind every paycheck.



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## The Hidden Burden on Families and Communities

The emotional, physical and social cost of each death ripples far beyond the job site. Survivors are left navigating grief, economic loss, housing instability, and intergenerational trauma. Children lose parents. Communities lose mentors. Families are thrust into poverty.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) estimates that each suicide affects at least 135 people, while opioid-related deaths carry a cumulative cost of more than \$1 trillion annually in healthcare, law enforcement, and lost productivity.

Yet, policies continue to focus on punitive approaches, ignoring the deeper need for trauma-informed care, dignity-centered management practices, and prevention rather than remediation.



## Policy Without Psychological Safety Is Performative

We cannot build the future of our workforce on unstable ground. Policies that fail to create psychological safety, cultural humility, and emotional well-being are not just inadequate—they are dangerous. Worse, when those policies carry retaliatory rhetoric or suppress dialogue, they become tools of oppression.

We've seen this in mental health referrals that don't include language access or cultural relevance, and in the silence that follows a suicide. The Massachusetts data showed that opioid deaths are linked to work-related injuries and illness. Prevention must start with providing safe, healthful workplaces where workers don't get injured in the first place. Nonetheless, training must be part of the plan!



**WE MUST  
TRANSITION FROM  
REMEDIATION  
TO PREVENTION**

## Building trades have created actionable steps to ensure supportive practices:

We are not powerless. Like any public health crisis, this moment calls for systemic change: Union-negotiated Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are workplace initiatives that provide confidential support and resources to employees and their families who may be facing personal or work-related challenges.

These programs aim to improve employee well-being and retention by addressing issues that can impact job performance, such as stress, mental health concerns, family problems, and substance abuse.

- Mental health parity enforcement across employer-sponsored healthcare plans, to ensure benefits from employers with the appropriate level of care.
- Trauma-informed workplace training for supervisors and HR departments.
- Statewide legislation requiring mental wellness guidance for industries with the highest rates of suicide deaths.
- Safe return-to-work programs for injured or recovering workers.
- Grief and bereavement support for affected coworkers and families.
- Wage transparency, workplace democracy, and safer working conditions as tools for mental wellness.

# What MassCOSH Is Doing – And What You Can Do, Too

MassCOSH is proud to be a leading voice in Massachusetts and nationally on worker health, safety, and justice. We are:

- Advocating for trauma-informed, equity-driven legislation in partnership with unions and state leaders
- Hosting bilingual training and “Toolbox Talks” to reduce stigma and build solidarity in workplaces
- Delivering opioid and suicide prevention education in collaboration with the Center for Construction Research and Training and other organizations.
- Training our Young Workers in Mental Health First Aid with the Aid and support of dedicated volunteers and Board members.
- Create or Expanding Opioid & Mental Health Resources and implementing referral system to ensure appropriate and timely manner care.
- Creating a coalition of labor leaders to build a statewide prevention framework that includes advocating for safe and healthful workplaces for all.

**But we need you with us.**



**THIS  
SHOULD  
NOT BE  
OUR FUTURE.**

- **To our legislators:**  
pass laws that center people, not profits or politics.
- **To our employers:**  
provide access to training for your workers.
- **To our unions:**  
keep organizing and building collective power.
- **To our communities:**  
mourn the dead—and fight like hell for the living.
- **To our workers:**  
you are not alone. You are not to blame.  
You are worth protecting!

“

**Our workers are building this Commonwealth with their hands, their time, and their lives. The very least we owe them is a workplace—and a world—where they are not dying in silence.**

**Tatiana Sofia Begault**  
*Executive Director, MassCOSH*

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The Cost of Building:

# CONSTRUCTION WORKER FATALITIES IN MASSACHUSETTS

*Each year, on Workers' Memorial Day, we pause to reflect on the lives lost to workplace injuries and illnesses—many of them in the construction sector. These are not just tragic accidents. They are stories of systemic failure. Stories of families broken, dreams halted, and lives cut short doing some of the most essential—and dangerous—work in our society.*

In 2024, Massachusetts recorded 17 construction worker deaths from traumatic injuries. The year before, in 2023, there were 25 such deaths, preceded by 13 in 2022 and 16 in 2021.

In 2024, Massachusetts recorded 17 construction worker deaths from traumatic injuries. The year before, in 2023, there were 25 such deaths, preceded by 13 in 2022 and 16 in 2021. But those numbers only tell part of the story. When we include suicides and drug overdoses, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 37 construction workers died in Massachusetts in 2023—a staggering figure that reflects both the physical and mental toll this industry takes on its workers.

This year, 2025, has already brought new sorrow. As of April, three construction workers have lost their lives on the job:

**Mario  
Diaz Obando**

A worker from Ecuador, was killed when a building under construction collapsed in Weymouth.

**Jose Luis  
Collaguazo Crespo,**

also Ecuadorian, died in Edgartown during a fatal construction incident.

**Rafael  
Cardoso**

from Brazil, was electrocuted while painting a house in Fall River.

Though the names vary, a pattern emerges: a disproportionate number of those dying on job sites are immigrant workers, doing dangerous work, often without strong protections or language-accessible safety training.

This is not an isolated problem. Massachusetts is experiencing a construction boom, particularly in housing development, but the push to build faster and cheaper has a human cost. While homes rise, so do deaths. Behind every ribbon-cutting ceremony or luxury condo unit, there may be a grave.





The construction industry holds the grim distinction of being the most fatal industry in the state, not only in terms of the total number of deaths but also by fatality rate, ranking second among all sectors. The primary causes of death—falls, being struck by objects, equipment-related accidents, overdose, and suicide—are largely preventable with the right policies, protections, and culture of care.

## And we do have tools to address this crisis.



Organizations like CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training, which is funded by NIOSH (the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health), have developed comprehensive resources to prevent workplace hazards. CPWR provides materials to address fall protection, struck-by injuries, mental health challenges, and opioid abuse. Their Toolbox Talks, available in both English and Spanish, help bridge the communication gaps that often place immigrant workers at greater risk.

However, these tools are not enough unless they're matched by public investment, legislative will, and cultural change. In a time of political hostility toward science, budget cuts to health agencies, and the dismantling of vital institutions like NIOSH, workers are being left defenseless.





## Fall Protection

Fall-related deaths are not unpredictable tragedies—they are preventable with the right systems in place. It's time we treat them as such. Workers must also be protected from retaliation when they speak out about unsafe heights, faulty equipment, or overlooked hazards. The housing crisis cannot be solved by turning a blind eye to the safety of the very people building our homes. Construction workers are not collateral damage in our quest for affordability. They are parents, caregivers, dreamers—human beings who deserve to return home after their shift, every time.

When we speak of building the future of Massachusetts, we must first ask: Who is building it? And are we doing everything possible to keep them alive? These workers—many of them immigrants—are laying the literal foundations of our communities. But too often, they remain invisible until tragedy strikes. Their names become headlines, then statistics, then footnotes—unless we decide to act.

On this Workers' Memorial Day, let us remember that every hard hat left hanging, every fall that didn't need to happen, every beam left unfinished, tells a story not just of loss—but of unmet responsibility.

“

The City of Boston is committed to protecting and promoting labor standards that ensure the health and safety of all workers.

Since the implementation of the City's Construction and Demolition Safety Ordinance in 2023, we have not only required Site Safety Plans and Site Safety Coordinators on construction sites in Boston, but also provided free multilingual health and safety training - including OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 - to more than 1,200 workers.

We are deeply grateful for the partnership of labor rights advocates like MassCOSH, who make these successes possible. Together, we will continue to use the tools at our disposal to ensure that all workers in Boston can go home to their families alive and well.

**Jodi Sugerman-Brozan**

*Deputy Chief, Worker Empowerment Cabinet*



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# IN MEMORIAM 2024-2025

*Listed below are the dozens of people who died from work-related causes in 2024 and in the first three months of 2025. Eight firefighters who died from documented work-related illness are included in this list. For the hundreds more workers in other sectors who likely died this year from occupational diseases, we have no names. No government agency collects comprehensive data about these individuals and no database contains their information. We don't know who these fallen workers were, or under what conditions they passed, but we honor them all.*

## 2024

**Fredrika Ballard**  
53, Leyden - 01/14/2024  
Flight School Owner/Operator,

**William Hampton**  
68, Leyden - 01/14/2024  
Flight Instructor

**Karen Johnson**  
54, Worcester - 01/18/2024  
Registered Nurse

**Jason Coughlin**  
42, Salem - 01/20/2024  
Sprinkler Fitter

**Brian Dussault**  
45, Fall River - 01/27/2024  
Oil Burner Technician

**Michael Potter**  
54, Chicopee - 01/27/2024  
Carpenter

**Gabriel Santiago**  
42, Hingham - 01/28/2024  
Roofer

**Gercier De Faria**  
51, Hanson - 02/7/2024  
Construction Laborer

**Brian Wideman**  
45, Burlington - 02/18/2024  
Retail Team Lead

**Raymond Mello**  
59, Saugus - 02/22/2024  
Real Estate Appraiser

**Helen Murgida**  
81, Newburyport - 02/28/2024  
Minister

**Nancy Moyer**  
68, Dennis - 04/03/2024 -  
Firefighter

**Anthony Junior Lopez**  
30, Framingham - 04/20/2024 -  
Cook

**Thomas Kilduff**  
67, Uxbridge - 04/20/2024  
Shipping Clerk

**Ian Taylor**  
49, Billerica - 04/26/2024  
Police Officer

**Alacrino Dias**  
68, Franklin - 05/01/2024  
Cook

**William Smith**  
81, Baldwinville - 05/14/2024  
Custodian

**Matthew Troy**  
32, Boston - 06/12/2024  
Firefighter

**William Carrazzo**  
70, Plymouth - 06/20/2024  
Mechanic

**Paul Downes**  
70, Hull - 6/24/2024 - Delivery  
Driver

**Luis Sanchez Bencosme**  
36, Seekonk - 07/02/2024  
Sales Worker

**Edy Cujcuy Yool**  
25, Marlborough - 07/17/2024  
Construction Laborer

**Jean Revil**  
67, Fall River - 07/17/2024  
Donated Goods Mover,

**David Sousa**  
57, West Bridgewater - 07/27/2024  
Highway Maintenance Foreman

**Barry Medeiros**  
43, Boston - 08/09/2024  
Construction Laborer

**Mark D'Antonio**  
66, Wellesley - 08/09/2024  
General Contractor

**Matthew Forand**  
45, New Bedford - 08/15/2024  
Firefighter

**John Dunnet**  
66, Peabody - 08/16/2024  
Carpenter

**Nicholas Charles Costantino**  
36, Blandford - 08/16/2024  
Truck Driver

**Brian Derby**  
67, Sterling - 08/22/2024  
Heavy Equipment Operator

**Carl Varrell**  
76, Marblehead - 08/25/2024  
Police Officer

**Edward Seligman**  
69, Swampscott - 09/04/2024  
Firefighter

**Cristian Diaz Mejia**  
27, New Bedford - 09/06/2024  
Construction Laborer

**Jason Gould**  
46, Brockton - 09/08/2024  
Firefighter

**Jerome McGee**  
60, Brockton - 09/11/2024  
House Painter

**Enrique Delgado-Garcia**  
25, New Braintree - 09/13/2024  
Police Recruit

**Samuel Epstein**  
49, Billerica - 09/24/2024  
Chemical Engineer

**Fredrick True**  
77, Wrentham - 10/01/2024  
Police Officer

**Reynaldo Martinez**  
25, Leominster - 10/07/2024  
Commercial Painter

**Charles Fronk**  
60, Braintree - 10/11/2024  
Truck Driver

**Darwin Morocho**  
33, Plymouth - 10/15/2024  
Construction Laborer

**Michael Buckley**  
58, Malden - 10/18/2024  
Firefighter

**Celso Dias**  
37, Methuen - 11/02/2024  
Carpenter

**Kenny Milanez**  
41, Methuen - 11/02/2024  
Carpenter

**James Harrington**  
78, Charlton - 11/19/2024  
Logger

**Richard Gillis**  
55, Brookline - 12/04/2024  
Firefighter

**Jeffrey Albanese**  
49, Brockton - 12/21/2024  
Firefighter

**Tony Nan**  
61, Holyoke - 12/25/2024  
HVAC Installer

## 2025

**Mark Stomski**  
53, Worcester - 01/12/2025  
Firefighter

**Samuel Mooskian**  
72, Everett - 01/18/2025  
Retail Worker

**Matthew Nedorostek**  
66, Greenfield - 01/24/2025  
Concrete Plant Worker

**Weslei Seibel**  
46, Boston - 01/26/2025  
Car Rental Employee

**Mario Diaz Obando**  
29, Weymouth - 01/28/2025  
Construction Worker

**Jose Luis Collaguazo Crespo**  
32, Edgartown - 02/11/2025  
Construction Worker

**Michael Sarnie**  
60, Taunton - 02/17/2025  
Tree Worker

**Richard Mattson**  
39, Taunton - 03/01/2025  
Equipment Operator

**Rafael Cardoso Martins**  
23, Fall River - 03/04/2025  
Construction Worker

**Ryan Almeida**  
48, West Springfield - 03/28/2025  
Construction Worker

**Raul Bohorquez**  
57, West Springfield - 03/28/2025  
Construction Worker

**Igor Costa**  
26, West Springfield - 03/28/2025  
Construction Worker

**Mario Da Paixao Andrade**  
48, Harwich - 04/03/2025  
Painter



# CALL FOR ACTION

Take action. Contact your legislator. Donate to MassCOSH prevention efforts. Speak up in your workplace. Because not one more life should be lost to neglect, stigma, or silence.

**TATIANA@MASSCOSH.ORG | WWW.MASSCOSH.ORG**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Co-Chair, MassCOSH Health-Technical Committee; National COSH Advisor*

### MassCOSH Staff

→ **Al Vega**

*Chief of Strategy & Engagement*

→ **Francisca Sepulveda**

*Immigrant Worker Center Director*

→ **Hazel Jones**

*Development & Communications Coordinator*

→ **Rick Rabin**

*Trainer and Technical Consultant*

→ **Tatiana Sofia Begault**

*Executive Director*

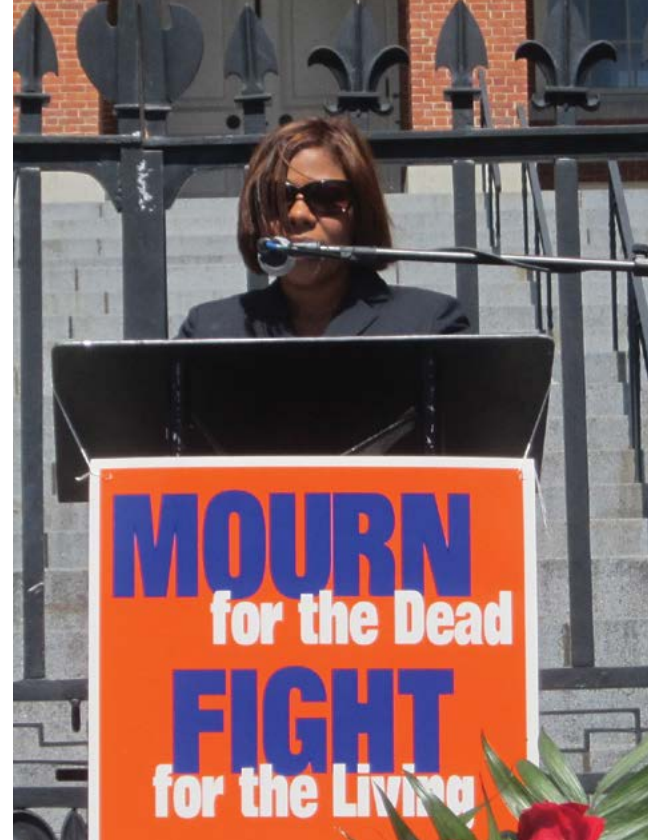
→ **Graphic Designer:**

**Maggy Luy**



***The information and data gathered for this report were obtained from the following sources:***

- Articles from newspapers throughout Massachusetts and nationally
- Environmental Protection Agency Extreme Heat Data
- International Institute for Environment and Development Extreme Heat Data
- Center for American Progress: Extreme Heat Is More Dangerous for Workers Every Year
- Massachusetts Department of Fire Services: Massachusetts Wildland Fires Spiked 1,200% in October
- Massachusetts Water Resources Commission: Drought Management in Massachusetts
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: Wildland Fires
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor
- Economic Policy Institute: Immigrants and the Economy
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Boston Regional Office
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Surveillance Program
- Takala, J., Hämäläinen, P., Saarela, K. L., Yun, L. Y., Manickam, K., Jin, T. W., Heng, P., Tjong, C., Kheng, L. G., Lim, S., & Lin, G. S. (2014). Global Estimates of the Burden of Injury and Illness at Work in 2012. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, 11(5), 326–337.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15459624.2013.863131>
- <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/massachusetts/>
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/opioid-related-overdose-deaths-among-injured-workers-in-massachusetts-findings-from-the-public-health-data-warehouse/download>
- CDC Suicide Data
- NIOSH Worker Suicide & Opioid Reports
- BLS Occupational Fatality Statistics 2023
- National Safety Council: Opioids in the Workplace





United Support &  
Memorial for  
Workplace Fatalities  
www.usmwf.org



## USMWF

USMWF is an organized community of dedicated family member victims, a nationally recognized non-profit leader driving the transformation of the work environment to safe and healthy conditions for all employers & employees – both today and tomorrow.



## Greater Boston Labor Council

Chartered by the National AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council's mission is to improve the lives of working families within the 24 communities in our jurisdiction.

gblc.us - (617) 763-0856



## MassCOSH

MassCOSH bring together workers, unions, community groups, and health, safety and environmental activists to organize and advocate for safe, healthful jobs

masscosh.org - (617) 825-7233



## Massachusetts AFL-CIO

The Massachusetts AFL-CIO empowers and supports workers in their effort to promote justice, educate the public about the value of unions, and improve the economic stability and security of working families and communities throughout the Commonwealth.

massaflcio.org - (781) 324-8230



**Contribute to the Movement:**

