



DEATH ON THE JOB

THE TOLL OF NEGLECT

KEY FINDINGS | 30TH EDITION | MAY 2021

275

U.S. WORKERS DIE EACH DAY FROM HAZARDOUS WORKING CONDITIONS



IN 2019, 5,333 WORKING PEOPLE WERE KILLED ON THE JOB AND AN ESTIMATED 95,000 DIED FROM OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES.

8.1

MILLION PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES LACK OSHA PROTECTION



IN 2019, THEIR INJURY AND ILLNESS RATE WAS 64% HIGHER THAN EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

WORKPLACE SAFETY VIOLATION PENALTIES ARE TOO

WEAK



\$3,923 AVERAGE FEDERAL OSHA PENALTY FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS.

\$12,144 MEDIAN FEDERAL OSHA PENALTY FOR WORKER DEATHS.

DOES YOUR EMPLOYER KEEP YOU

SAFE?



IN 2020, OSHA ONLY HAD ONE SAFETY INSPECTOR FOR EVERY 82,881 WORKERS. OSHA'S BUDGET AMOUNTS TO \$3.97 TO PROTECT EACH WORKER.

UNIONS ARE PROTECTING WORKERS FROM COVID-19 AND SAVING LIVES

More than 570,000 U.S. deaths from COVID-19 so far—including many who are working-age adults and people of color.

THE WORKPLACE IS STILL A HOTBED FOR COVID-19, AND WORKPLACE EXPOSURES HAVE BEEN LARGELY IGNORED



COVID-19 travels person to person through the air and is inhaled. Workplaces are especially high-risk settings for COVID-19 spread, and the lack of prevention measures lead to many infections and deaths.

COVID-19 exposures in the workplace are preventable, but employers often cherry-pick guidelines for convenience, rather than effectiveness.

Many workplace fatalities went uninvestigated by OSHA and most complaints were closed without an OSHA inspection.

Federal OSHA and MSHA have not issued COVID-19 standards and have conducted far too few inspections to hold employers accountable for keeping workers safe. As of February 2021, federal OSHA cited only 346 employers for COVID-19 violations, resulting in an average penalty of \$3,751 for each citation.

Governments have not tracked cases by industry or occupation, minimizing the critical role of workplace exposures in the pandemic.

COVID-19 HAS TAKEN A DISPROPORTIONATE TOLL ON WORKERS OF COLOR

Leading up to the pandemic, Black and Latino workers were at increased risk of dying on the job compared to all workers.

Of working-aged people (30 to 59 years old) who have died from COVID-19, 26% are Latino and 24% are Black.



Black and Latino workers make up a large portion of essential workers and have been at greatest risk of exposure and death from COVID-19 because of their working conditions.

Black and Latino individuals have been less likely to receive a vaccine. Of those fully vaccinated, only 10% are Latino, and 8% are Black.

Workers of color and immigrant workers often face retaliation for raising safety concerns with their employers.



UNIONS ARE SAVING LIVES

When workers and our unions have held employers accountable, workers have had stronger protections from COVID-19.

Unions fight for employers to create comprehensive COVID-19 prevention plans to reduce virus spread in the workplace.

The Labor movement fights for state and federal OSHA standards that require employers to provide clean air through ventilation, reduce interactions and occupancy, report cases, and provide training.

Unions are still fighting for an increased supply of respirators and for employers to provide them.

Unions fight for paid leave for workers when exposed or infected to keep the virus out of the workplace.

Unions help protect workers from retaliation for raising safety concerns.

Unions help ensure vaccine access to workers at greatest risk, and ensure employers continue to prevent exposures on the job.

MOURN FOR THE
DEAD
FIGHT FOR THE
LIVING

COVID-19
WORKPLACE SAFETY
STANDARDS ARE
NEEDED TO
SAVE LIVES

[AFLCIO.ORG/DEATH-ON-THE-JOB](https://aflcio.org/death-on-the-job)

50 YEARS OF OSHA PROTECTIONS

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTIONS

The Occupational Safety and Health Agency opened its doors in 1971. Fifty years later, significant progress has been made, but much more is needed to fulfill the promise of safe jobs for all.



BUT PROGRESS HAS STALLED AND MANY WORKERS REMAIN IN SERIOUS DANGER.

OSHA is underfunded and understaffed. Penalties are too low and many workers do not have coverage.



LATINO AND BLACK WORKERS ARE AT INCREASED RISK



20%

OF WORKERS KILLED ON THE JOB ARE **LATINO AND 12% ARE BLACK WORKERS**. THEIR JOB FATALITY RATES ARE HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

THE FATALITY RATE FOR WORKERS AGES 65 AND OLDER



IS NEARLY **THREE TIMES HIGHER** THAN THE RATE FOR ALL WORKERS.

THE RISK OF WORKPLACE CHEMICAL EXPOSURE



CHRONIC CHEMICAL EXPOSURES ON THE JOB ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ESTIMATED **50,000 DEATHS AND 190,000 ILLNESSES** EACH YEAR.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IS THE THIRD-LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH ON THE JOB



IN THE PAST DECADE, THERE WAS A

52% INCREASE

IN SERIOUS WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INJURIES FOR WORKERS IN HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE.

RENEW THE
PROMISE
SAFE JOBS
FOR ALL

AFL-CIO