

This monthly e-newsletter provides updates on the Workplace Safety Programs at the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI), Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC). Any Texas employer with or without workers' compensation insurance is eligible for these services.

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### Transportation Safety Information

#### Reduced Visibility in Winter

Employees should avoid driving in weather conditions that include ice and snow due to poor road conditions and reduced vehicle performance. Employees may also experience reduced visibility and glare due to ice and snow that obscures road markings and conditions. If driving in these conditions cannot be avoided, drivers



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### Safety Tips

#### Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls represented the third leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in Texas in 2014. In addition, there were an estimated 13,680 nonfatal cases involving days away from work attributed to slips, trips, and falls.

There are four main requirements that relate to slip, trip, and fall hazards as specified by OSHA in the Code of Federal Regulations (29 CFR 1910):



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#### Share



## Transportation Safety Information (cont.)

should allow extra time for travel and use the following tips to prevent crashes and injuries.

### Hidden Road Markings and Conditions

If lane markings are covered by snow or ice, drivers should try to judge the vehicle width in relation to the width of the road by identifying physical reference points to properly position the vehicle on the roadway such as guardrails, traffic signs, or utility poles. Following existing tire tracks may be helpful as well.

Drivers should be aware of shady areas where ice build-up might occur under snow or leaves. Also, bridges and exit and entrance ramps may be icy when other areas are not.

### Glare

Sunlight can reflect off of wet, snowy, or icy roads, which can make the eyes tired and decrease visibility. Drivers should keep all windows and vehicle sun visors clean and ready for use when driving in the sun, and may also wear polarized sunglasses to help reduce extra glare.

### Windshield Visibility

Snow and ice can turn to slush on a busy roadway that may kick back onto vehicle windshields. A driver should be prepared with enough windshield washer fluid to quickly and thoroughly clean the vehicle's windshield during a trip. Before departure, drivers should be sure that the vehicles' heating and defrost systems are working properly and use them to remove extra moisture and fog from the windows. ▲

## Download!

### DWC Resources

DWC offers the following free winter driving safety publication:

- *Driving in the Winter FactSheet*

This publication is available in English and Spanish, and is available on the agency website at [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/targettransrltd.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/targettransrltd.html), along with more than 30 driving safety publications.

DWC features a free occupational safety and health DVD loan library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit the TDI website at [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html).

DVDs on many driving dangers are found under the following headings:

- Driving Safety
- Transportation Safety (includes safe operation of buses and vans)
- Trucking Safety (covers professional trucking, both straight trucks and tractor trailers)

These DVDs include the following titles:

- *Master Driver: Extreme Weather Driving* [for professional truck drivers] DVD2896 (14 min.)
- *Safe Winter Driving* DVD1104ES (17 min.)
- *Winter Driving Safety* DVD2621, DVD2621S (12 min.)

### Other Resources

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers winter driving tips on its website at [www.safercar.gov/WinterDrivingTips](http://www.safercar.gov/WinterDrivingTips).

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) offers a Safe Winter Driving webpage on its website at [www.osha.gov/Publications/safeDriving.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/safeDriving.html), as well as other winter weather precautions at [www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter\\_weather/hazards\\_precautions.html](http://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/hazards_precautions.html).

The National Traffic Safety Institute offers winter driving safety tips and how to prepare a winter driving survival kit on its website at <https://ntsi.com/quick-links/safety-articles/winter-driving/>.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) offers winter travel safety resources on its website at [www.txdot.gov/driver/weather/winter-travel.html](http://www.txdot.gov/driver/weather/winter-travel.html). TxDOT also provides road conditions on its website at <http://drivetexas.org/>.

## Safety Tips (cont.)

- housekeeping
- aisles and passageways
- covers and guardrails
- floor loading

### Housekeeping

Workplaces must be kept clean, orderly, and sanitary, and floors must be as clean and dry as possible at all times. In facilities where wet processes are used, proper drainage must be provided and liquids on the floor must be cleaned up immediately.

Controlling clutter is also a key factor in proper housekeeping. Employers can do this by creating and designating storage for equipment and tools, labeling regular parking areas for powered industrial trucks, and training employees in housekeeping practices.

### Aisles and Passageways

Sufficient and safe clearances are needed for aisles, loading docks, doorways, and all areas that a turn or passage must be made when using mechanical handling equipment. Aisles and passageways must be kept clear and in good repair with no obstructions in aisles that may create a hazard.

### Covers and Guardrails

Employers must provide covers and/or guardrails to protect employees from the hazards of open pits, tanks, vats, ditches, and other similar hazards.

### Floor Loading

The floor loading capacity must be clearly marked and properly posted for any employee to see. Employees should be trained to read and understand these markings and directed not to exceed the load rating limits.

Employers and employees that are aware of their surroundings and comply with these basic requirements are more likely to minimize common occupational injuries in their workplaces. ▲

## Download!

### DWC Resources

DWC offers a *Slips and Falls Prevention - Take 5 for Safety* publication and many other safety publications in both English and Spanish on the agency website at [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html).

DWC features a free occupational safety and health DVD loan library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit the TDI website at [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html). DVDs on slips, trips, and falls are found under the "Slips, Trips, and Falls" subject heading.

### Other Resources

OSHA provides safety information on walking/working surfaces on its website at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/walkingworkingsurfaces/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/walkingworkingsurfaces/index.html). OSHA also provides a web page on the prevention of slips, trips, and falls in a hospital environment on the agency website at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/hazards/slips/slips.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/hazards/slips/slips.html).

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) provides information on preventing fall injuries in the workplace on the agency website at [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/). This web page also includes a link to related publications, such as *Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls in Wholesale and Retail Trade Establishments* available at [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/pubs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/pubs.html).

## Custom Onsite Training

**D**WC offers affordable on-site safety training courses to businesses, groups, and trade associations. Training focuses on industries or occupations that experience high rates of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in Texas.

DWC offers more than 30 on-site courses, including:

### *Walking/Working Surfaces*

Falls are a common cause of occupational injuries. This course provides the basic skills necessary to understand the hazards and safety requirements of walking and working surfaces, stairways, ladders, and scaffolds used in general industry. This program also provides control measures to prevent injuries caused by slips and falls. Topics include:

- general requirements for walking and working surfaces
- procedures for guarding floor and wall openings and holes
- protection methods for employees working on stairways and ladders
- general requirements for scaffolds

*(Length: 1 hour. This program may be included in the Safety & Health Outreach Program – General Industry.)*

The DWC Training Program Descriptions guide at [www.tdi.texas.gov/pubs/videoresource/ghsphstrainingp.pdf](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/pubs/videoresource/ghsphstrainingp.pdf) provides information on course content and length. Cost for on-site training varies according to the travel costs to the location. Many courses are offered at no cost to any business/industry by teleconference or webinar. ▲

## Book Your Training Class!

To request training, or for more information, call (512) 804-4610 or email [safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov).

## Free OSHA 10-Hour Construction Classes

**D**WC offers free OSHA 10-Hour Construction classes in both English and Spanish in Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. Each two-day course is presented by authorized instructors and designed to train employers and employees on the essentials of occupational health and safety for construction. Classes cover specific OSHA standards and requirements as they apply to the construction industry and teach safety awareness to help recognize and reduce the risks of job-site hazards. Participants that successfully complete the course receive an OSHA 10-Hour Construction class completion card within six to eight weeks. ▲

## Register!

Additional information is available on the TDI website at [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/events/index.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/events/index.html).

Registration is required due to limited space. To register or request more information on class availability, call (512) 804-4610.

## Safety DVDs Featuring Slips, Trips, and Falls

The DWC Resource Center contains approximately 4,000 DVDs in its library, and includes more than 60 DVDs related to slips, trips, and falls. Some titles are available in both English and Spanish. DVD titles and descriptions are found under the "Slips, Trips, and Falls" subject heading.

### ***Adventures in the Food Trade: Slips, Trips, and Falls*** DVD2461, DVD2461S

Teaches employees that slips, trips, and falls are the dominant accident type in all kinds of restaurant operations. Offers safety tips for restaurant employees to prevent fall accidents. Covers causes, awareness, and housekeeping. 5 min.

### ***Preventing Slips and Falls in Trucking*** DVD2599

Most trucking injuries are caused by drivers slipping and falling when entering and exiting their vehicles. Trains truckers on proper footwear, how to properly enter/exit the vehicle by using the three point triangulation system, and other safety basics. 13 min.

### ***Slips, Trips & Falls: Taking the Right Steps*** DVD2277ES

Emphasizes the importance of taking proper cautions. Covers prevention techniques for working on wet surfaces and in poor weather conditions. Discusses stairs, ladders, and housekeeping. 18 min.

### ***Small Falls Are a Big Deal*** DVD1600, DVD1600S

A firefighter/emergency medical technician recalls stories of fall injuries he has treated to make the point that small falls can be a big deal. While small falls rarely make the evening news, they can result in broken bones, skull fractures, and other disabling conditions. This DVD stresses that employees can prevent most fall injuries by recognizing and controlling the fall hazards they find. Topics include the importance of wearing proper footwear, recognizing and controlling slip and trip hazards, transitional areas and changing walking surface conditions, correcting fall hazards, situational awareness, and moving from one level to another. 19 min.▲

## Book Your DVDs!

The DWC Resource Center catalog and information on how any Texas employer or employee can check out safety DVDs for free are available at [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html).

## Upcoming Safety Observances

**January 1-31, 2016**

***National Radon Action Month***

**February 1-28**

***American Heart Disease Awareness Month***

**February 1-7**

***National Burn Awareness Week***

**March 1-31**

***Workplace Eye Wellness Month***

**March 20-26**

***National Poison Prevention Week***

**April 1-30**

***Distracted Driving Awareness Month***

**April 1-30**

***Alcohol Awareness Month***

**April 1-30**

***Injury Prevention Month***

**April 5-11**

***National Window Safety Week***

**April 6-12**

***National Public Health Week***

**April 7**

***World Health Day***

## OSHA Launches Online Reporting Tool

OSHA's revised recordkeeping rule, effective January 1, 2015, requires employers to report all work-related in-patient hospitalizations, amputations, and losses of an eye to them within 24 hours of the event. OSHA recently launched an online form located on its website at <https://www.osha.gov/pls/ser/serform.html> to allow employers to report these events. The other options for reporting are still available:

1. Contact the nearest OSHA Area Office to the site of the incident (in person or by telephone).
2. Call the OSHA toll-free telephone number, (800) 321-OSHA (6742).

The Texas OSHA Area Offices are listed on the OSHA website at <https://www.osha.gov/oshdir/tx.html>. Employers can access additional information about the reporting requirements at <https://www.osha.gov/report.html>.

## OSHA Launches Education and Enforcement Action to Protect Employees in the Poultry Industry

According to OSHA, poultry industry employees are twice as likely to suffer serious injuries and six times more likely to get sick on the job than other private sector employees. In response to this, OSHA has launched a new Regional Emphasis Program in Region VI (including Texas) to reduce musculoskeletal disorders and ergonomic stressors effecting poultry industry employees.

OSHA's emphasis program began October 26, 2015, with a three-month period of education and outreach activities to share safety and health information with employers, employees, and associations. OSHA will then begin its targeted enforcement phase that includes on-site inspections and a review of poultry processing production operations, working conditions, recordkeeping, chemical handling, and safety and health programs to ensure compliance. The emphasis program ends October 25, 2016.

For more information, see the news release from OSHA's Dallas Regional Office on the agency website at [www.osha.gov/newsrelease/reg6-20151027.html](http://www.osha.gov/newsrelease/reg6-20151027.html). OSHA also offers an index page on safety in poultry processing that links to standards, hazards and solutions, publications, posters, wallet cards, an e-tool for assessing ergonomic challenges, and other resources available on the agency website at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/poultryprocessing/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/poultryprocessing/index.html).

## OSHA Publishes Two New Fact Sheets Addressing Tractor Safety for Agricultural Employees and Maritime Employees Who Service Refrigeration Systems

According to OSHA, most farmworker injuries and deaths involve tractors and include overturns, sudden start-ups, and unintended contact with tractor attachments or implements. OSHA published a new fact sheet on tractor hazards that shows agricultural employers how to protect their employees. It is available on the agency website at [www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3835.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3835.pdf).

The new OSHA *Hazards During the Repair and Maintenance of Refrigeration Systems on Vessels* fact sheet advises maritime industry employers on how to protect employees that service these systems and use hazardous chemicals such as ammonia and Freon.<sup>®</sup> This fact sheet is available on the agency website at [www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3836.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3836.pdf).

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## OSHA Update (cont.)

### Free Help with OSHA Compliance

**D**WC provides free help with OSHA compliance for small and medium-sized businesses, with priority given to high-hazard industries, through its Occupational Safety and Health Consultation (OSHCON) program. OSHCON is a non-regulatory program with professional safety and health consultants that is available to help identify and eliminate occupational hazards in your workplace, whether or not your company carries workers' compensation insurance. Benefits for employers participating in the OSHCON program include prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses; confirmation to employees and customers of their commitment to safety; public acknowledgement of their safety efforts; monetary savings by reducing workers' compensation costs and other costs associated with work-related injuries and illnesses; and protection of company assets such as employees, equipment, supplies, products, and facilities. ▲

### Find Out More About OSHCON!

For information about the OSHCON program and help with OSHA standards, contact the DWC at (800) 252-7031, Option 2, or by email at [OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov); or visit the OSHCON website at <http://txoshcon.com/>.

## NIOSH Update

### New Safety Curriculum Announced

NIOSH and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) unveiled a one-hour interactive teaching module and slide presentation for students in grades seven through twelve called "Safety Matters". The presentation teaches basic skills for being safe and healthy on the job, including the following concepts:

- All employees can become injured, sick, or even be killed on the job.
- Work-related injuries and illnesses are predictable and can be prevented.
- Employers are responsible for, and employees have the right to, a safe and healthy workplace.

Students also learn how to identify hazards and emergencies at work and the best ways to address them. They are taught how to find resources to help keep them safe and healthy on the job, and how to communicate with others—including people in authority—when they feel unsafe or threatened.

More information can be found on the NIOSH Science Blog on the agency website at <http://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2015/10/28/safety-matters/>. ▲

### DWC Workplace Safety Job Postings

There are many benefits to working for the State of Texas and DWC, as detailed on the agency website at [www.tdi.texas.gov/jobs/index.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/jobs/index.html).

A complete listing of positions currently available can be viewed at [www.tdi.texas.gov/jobs/jobs.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/jobs/jobs.html).

## Report Unsafe Working Conditions

The DWC Safety Violations Hotline is a bilingual, 24-hour, toll-free telephone line that allows Texas employees to confidentially report unsafe working conditions to DWC. By law, employers are responsible for providing a safe work environment.

You may encounter safety and health hazards at work that could cause injury, illness, or death. The Safety Violations Hotline allows you to take an active role in preventing workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. After DWC receives a report of a work-related safety or health issue, its safety inspectors will work with the employer and insurance carrier to help eliminate hazards.

Employers are prohibited by law from retaliation and may not suspend, terminate, or otherwise discriminate against an employee for contacting the Safety Violations Hotline to report in good faith an alleged violation of an occupational safety or health law. ▲

### Report a Safety Violation

Report workplace safety or health hazards to the Safety Violations Hotline by calling (800) 452-9595 or use the online form at [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html). Reports of violations may be made anonymously.

For questions about workers' compensation claims, call DWC at (800) 252-7031. To report other non-safety related workplace issues, contact 2-1-1 Texas by dialing 211 on your telephone for information about how to get in touch with the appropriate agency.

## Upcoming Free Traffic Safety Workshops for Employers

NSC's *Our Driving Concern*: Texas Employer Traffic Safety Program will offer the following free employer train-the-trainer traffic safety workshops:

- **Fort Worth – Monday, January 18, 2016**  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital  
Heart Center  
1240 West Cannon Street  
Fort Worth, Texas 76104

- **Austin – Monday, February 1, 2016**  
8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

DWC Central Office  
7551 Metro Center Drive, Suite 100  
Austin, Texas 78744

- **San Marcos – Wednesday, March 23, 2016**  
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

630 East Hopkins Street  
San Marcos, Texas 78666

Space is limited. Register online at [www.txdrivingconcern.org](http://www.txdrivingconcern.org).

For more information, call Lisa Robinson at 512-466-7383 or email at [lisa.robinson@nsc.org](mailto:lisa.robinson@nsc.org).

## CONTACT US!

### FREE HELP WITH OSHA COMPLIANCE

- Occupational Safety and Health Consultation (OSHCON) Program  
[www.txoshcon.com](http://www.txoshcon.com)  
**(800) 252-7031 Option 2**  
[OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov)

### SAFETY AND HEALTH RESOURCES

- Free Safety and Health Publications  
[www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html)
- Free Audiovisual Loans  
[www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html)  
**(512) 804-4620**
- Safety Training Courses and Seminars  
**(512) 804-4610**  
[safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov)
- Helpful Safety and Health Resource Links  
[www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/govunivlinks.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/govunivlinks.html)

### OCCUPATIONAL INJURY AND ILLNESS DATA

- Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII)  
[www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/nonfatalhomepage.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/nonfatalhomepage.html)  
**(512) 804-5020**  
[InjuryAnalysis@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:InjuryAnalysis@tdi.texas.gov)
- Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI)  
[www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/fathomepage.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/fathomepage.html)  
**(512) 804-5020**  
[CFOI@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:CFOI@tdi.texas.gov)

### REPORT A SAFETY VIOLATION OR HAZARD

- Safety Violations Hotline  
Reports are taken in both English and Spanish and may be made anonymously.  
[www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html)  
**(800) 452-9595**

### RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

- [www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/rtw/index.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/rtw/index.html)  
**(512) 804-5000**

Subscribe to email alerts when the Safety & Health Update newsletter is published online at [www.tdi.texas.gov/alert/dwcsafetyhealth.html](http://www.tdi.texas.gov/alert/dwcsafetyhealth.html). You will also receive information on occupational safety and health matters, safety tips and publications, upcoming training events, training DVD loans, and OSHA updates.

Please forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues interested in preventing workplace injuries and illnesses. Have a safe day!

DWC Resource Center

(512) 804-4620

[ResourceCenter@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:ResourceCenter@tdi.texas.gov)