

# “The CHASE REPORT”

July 2023, Vol 8

An AKOSH Consultation and Training Newsletter

## The Chief's Corner

Hello CHASE participants. The Consultation staff hope you find value in reading our quarterly newsletter. In our last newsletter I spoke about Safety Stand-Down. This quarter I want to discuss Safe + Sound. If you haven't heard of the Safe + Sound Campaign, keep reading.



### What is Safe + Sound?

Safe + Sound is a nationwide event held each August that recognizes the successes of workplace health and safety

programs. August 7-13 is Safe + Sound week. It is a campaign to encourage every workplace to have a safety and health program, not just during this week, but year-round. Every workplace should have a safety and health program that includes management leadership, worker participation, and a systematic approach to finding and fixing hazards.

### Who Can Participate?

All organizations looking for an opportunity to recognize their commitment to safety are encouraged to participate. In 2022, more than 3,300 business helped bring awareness about workers' health and safety. Join businesses around the country in pledging their commitment to workplace safety and health. August 7-14 will focus on mental health. Visit <https://www.osha.gov/safeandsound> for more information.

Remember NO SAFETY SHORTCUTS—EVER.



**Elaine Banda**, Chief of Consultation and Training

### Words from CHASE Coordinator, Michael Flint

FALLS ARE THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATHS IN CONSTRUCTION. In 2020, there were 351 fatal falls to a lower level out of 1,008 construction fatalities (BLS data). These deaths are preventable.

Since 2012, OSHA has partnered with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) - Construction Sector on the Fall Prevention Campaign to raise awareness among workers and employers about common fall hazards in construction, and how falls from ladders, scaffolds and roofs can be prevented.

In addition to this campaign. OSHA has also implemented a National Emphasis Program (NEP) that targets specific industries by NAICS code. Many of you may soon receive a letter in the mail detailing the emphasis program and notifying you that unannounced enforcement inspections regarding falls are much more likely while this NEP is in effect. By participating in the AKOSH CHASE program you are placed on a lower priority list than other companies within your industry. We all still must be sure to hold each other accountable and keep our employees safe. All of you are being proactive by having on-site consultations and reaching out to us anytime you have questions. If you would like a consultation to review fall protection, please contact us anytime.

### Michael Flint

(he/him/they/them)  
CHASE Coordinator





## CHASE Spotlight

Each quarterly newsletter will spotlight one CHASE Partner. The idea is to highlight a hot topic or company that provides critical infrastructure to our state. As the CHASE program continues to grow, AKOSH Consultation expects to highlight other partners that work with our program, as well as various associations. This quarter we are highlighting **Heat Stress and Cold Stress**.

Most of us are very aware of the effects of cold and hypothermia. When the temperatures start getting warmer it can be easy to put those concerns to the side. When most people think of hypothermia, they think of frigid temperatures or blizzard-like conditions. Hypothermia occurs most often in the spring and fall, rather than winter. Four factors contribute to cold stress: cold temperatures, high or cold wind, dampness, and cold water. A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its core temperature of 98.6F. Cold air, water, and snow all draw heat from the body. So, while it is obvious that below freezing conditions combined with inadequate clothing could bring about cold stress, it is important to understand that it can also be brought about by temperatures in the 50's coupled with rain or wind.

What can be done for a person suffering from hypothermia?

- Call 911 immediately in an emergency; otherwise seek medical assistance as soon as possible.
- Move the person to a warm room or vehicle.
- Remove wet clothes and replace with dry clothes, cover the body (including the head and neck) with layers of blankets; and with a vapor barrier (e.g. tarp, garbage bag). Do not cover the face.
- If medical help is more than 30 minutes away:
  - ✓ Give warm sweetened drinks if alert (no alcohol), to help increase the body temperature.
  - ✓ Never try to give a drink to an unconscious person.
- Place warm bottles or hot packs in armpits, sides of chest, and groin. Call 911 for additional rewarming instructions.
- If a person is not breathing or has no pulse:
  - ✓ Call 911 for emergency medical assistance immediately.

In Alaska we can easily become complacent when it comes to the effects of heat in the workplace. While we may not always experience higher temperatures that many of us might like to see, heat illness is still a very real hazard for construction workers in Alaska. Most outdoor fatalities, 50% to 70%, occur in the first few days of working in warm or hot environments because the body needs to build a tolerance to the heat gradually over time. The process of building tolerance is called heat acclimatization. Lack of acclimatization represents a major risk factor for fatal outcomes. Our unpredictable weather can make this difficult or impossible for most of us. Age, weight, degree of physical fitness, degree of acclimatization, metabolism, dehydration, use of alcohol or drugs, and a variety of medical conditions such as hypertension all affect a person's sensitivity to heat. However, even the type of clothing worn must be considered. Even at lower summer temperatures it does not take much for an employee working on a hot rooftop to get over heated.

If you spot someone experiencing the symptoms of heat related illness, take action:

- Give them water to drink
- Move them to a cooler area
- Cool them with water, ice or a fan
- Remove unnecessary clothing
- Do not them leave alone
- If in doubt, call 911 or seek medical care

The infographic features the OSHA logo and the title "Heat exposure can be dangerous". It lists "Signs of a medical emergency!" as abnormal thinking or behavior, slurred speech, seizures, and loss of consciousness. It then provides three numbered actions: 1. Call 911 immediately, 2. Cool the worker right away with water or ice, and 3. Stay with the worker until help arrives. The background shows a construction site with workers and a person receiving first aid.

## Closing Remarks from Chief Banda

Remember, “The Public is Watching You.” Stay safe everyone!