

ALASKA VPP NEWSLETTER

April 2023

Good day VPP Safety Coordinators!

This year, National Safety Stand Down is May 1-5, 2023. Fatalities caused by falls from elevation continue to be a leading cause of death for construction employees, accounting for 378 of the 986 construction fatalities recorded in 2021 (BLS data). **Those deaths were preventable.** The National Safety Stand-Down raises fall hazard awareness across the country to stop fall fatalities and injuries. A Safety Stand-Down is a voluntary event for employers to talk directly to employees about safety. Any workplace can hold a stand-down by taking a break to focus on "Fall Hazards" and reinforcing the importance of "Fall Prevention". Employers of companies not exposed to fall hazards can also use this opportunity to have a conversation with employees about the other job hazards they face, protective methods, and the company's safety policies and goals. It can also be an opportunity for employees to talk to management about fall and other job hazards they see. Anyone who wants to prevent hazards in the workplace can participate in the Stand-Down. Companies can conduct a Safety Stand-Down by taking a break to have a toolbox talk or another safety activity such as conducting safety equipment inspections, developing rescue plans, or discussing job specific hazards. Managers are encouraged to plan a stand-down that works best for their workplace anytime.

Conferences

This year the 27th Annual Region 10 VPP conference will be held in Kennewick, WA, May 16-18, 2023. Currently, Alaska has 7 participants registered to attend. For more information about attending this conference, contact Sharrell Lien, Conference Coordinator, at 503-508-3018 or email her at sharrell.lien@dcbs.oregon.gov.

Featured VPP Success Story



Congratulations to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) for their unwavering commitment to employee safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenging circumstances, FMH rose to the occasion and found innovative ways to deliver healthcare while minimizing potential exposure to employees. The emergency operations plan was put to the test and the team rose to the challenge, implementing changes in policy, processes, and employee and patient flow through departments to ensure employee safety. The focus on basic principles such as hand hygiene, social distancing, and wearing masks, as well as strategies to safely extend the use of personal protective equipment, helped keep employees safe during the pandemic.

We would also like to commend FMH for their dedication to workplace violence prevention. The expansion of the AVADE Workplace Violence Prevention Training program to include employees beyond Security, Emergency Department, and Behavioral Health Department, and the enhanced AVADE refresher course, demonstrates a commitment to keeping employees safe and limiting the use of force when responding to violent patients. Additionally, the 2022 VPP Health & Safety Fair provided an opportunity for employees to receive health and safety training in various formats, including virtual safety fair videos, which allowed for wider participation. The addition of the OSHA VPP Wall in the hallway and the revised Contractor Safety Orientation launched in 2022 are further examples of FMH's commitment to employee safety. Congratulations to FMH on their impressive efforts to prioritize employee safety and well-being.

If you have VPP questions, call Christian Hendrickson at 907-269-4946 or e-mail him at: christian.hendrickson@alaska.gov Thanks for taking the time to read this newsletter.

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