



HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

## Infrastructure/Construction Worker Health and Safety Needs

*AIHA urges Federal policymakers to address the following issues in any infrastructure legislation that is enacted into law.*

### About AIHA

AIHA is the association for scientists and professionals committed to preserving and ensuring occupational and environmental health and safety in the workplace and community. Founded in 1939, we support our members with our expertise, networks, comprehensive education programs, and other products and services that help them maintain the highest professional and competency standards. More than half of AIHA's nearly 8,500 members are Certified Industrial Hygienists and many hold other professional designations. AIHA serves as a resource for those employed across the public and private sectors as well as to the communities in which they work. For more information, please visit [www.aiha.org](http://www.aiha.org).

### Workforce Development

- Require all construction workers to complete a U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-hour, OSHA 30-hour, or equivalent training course for construction.
- Encourage secondary schools to allow students to earn high school graduation credit by completing an OSHA 10-hour, OSHA 30-hour, or equivalent training course.
- Encourage community colleges and other construction trade educational institutions to incorporate OSHA 30-hour or equivalent construction safety and health training into course content and degree requirements.
- Expand awareness and access to construction apprenticeship programs with a focus on:
  - underserved populations
  - students
  - unemployed
  - veterans
  - active duty military personnel and dependents

- Encourage apprenticeship programs to include an OSHA 10- or 30-hour training course.
- Require Federal Registered Apprenticeship programs to include an OSHA 10- or 30-hour training course.

## **Hazard Communication and Training**

- Encourage supervisors and workers to utilize the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health’s (NIOSH) Total Worker Health® program, which provides a holistic approach to worker health and safety and well-being.<sup>1</sup>
- Train construction worksite supervisors on soft skills such as communication, active listening, conflict resolution, problem-solving, public speaking, and leadership.
- Significantly expand OSHA’s Diverse Workforce/Limited English Proficiency Coordinators program, which provides small businesses, trade associations, local unions, communities, and other groups with outreach, education, and training in Spanish and other languages.<sup>2</sup>
- Significantly expand education and outreach efforts for workers and supervisors, with a particular focus on:
  - responding to workers’ safety concerns
  - workers’ right to a safe and healthful work environment, including whistleblower protections
  - indoor and outdoor air quality
  - manual material and tool handling, including lifting and vibration
  - noise
  - heat and cold stress
  - struck-by hazards
  - falls and fall protection requirements
  - caught-in or -between hazards
  - illnesses and diseases associated with microbial growth, the use of pesticides or rodenticides, ultraviolet exposure from the sun, and contact with biological agents, plants, rodents, animals, or insects
  - illnesses and diseases related to welding, cutting, brazing, soldering, and other construction work activities that produce toxic dusts, fumes, mists, vapors, and gases
  - permit-required confined spaces
  - electrical and shock hazards
  - fire prevention and emergency action plans
  - product labeling and storage of hazardous chemicals
  - storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous chemical wastes
  - trained equipment operators and transportation drivers

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/default.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/complianceassistance/diverse-workforce-lep-coordinators>

- training on the selection of engineering and/or administrative controls before selecting respirators and other personal protective clothing and equipment
- training on the selection and use of personal protective equipment for job-specific hazards and work tasks
- traffic safety for all vehicles and equipment entering or exiting the job site, especially in urban or high-traffic areas
- precautions for the safe use of stationary and mobile cranes
- Encourage businesses to implement a Buy Quiet program to reduce the risks of irreversible occupational hearing loss and associated costs. NIOSH provides a model program for businesses to follow.<sup>3,4</sup>

### **Research, Development, and Deployment**

- Expand research, development, and deployment of hazard sensor technologies.
- Expand work on fall protection/anchor points for elevated work.
- Develop training to aid non-English speakers in learning key information related to identifying, preventing, and responding to occupational health and safety hazards.
- Expand research on the following areas regarding corrosive drywall:
  - what causes the release of sulfide gases
  - emission rates and duration
  - characterization of specific chemicals in emissions and their potential contribution to corrosion, odor, and irritation
  - how emissions change over time and under varying environmental conditions
  - occupant health risks
  - operational implications of electrical and mechanical components with and without blackening
  - worker exposure during demolition and cleanup
  - appropriate personal protective equipment and work practices

### **Enforcement**

- Increase enforcement of workplace health and safety requirements, with a particular focus on:
  - respiratory protection
  - smaller job sites
  - ensuring that supervisors communicate with workers in a language that each worker understands and that programs are in place to help workers understand key workplace health and safety terms

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/buyquiet/component.html>

<sup>4</sup> An overview of occupational hearing loss and Buy Quiet programs can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/buyquiet/default.html>

- Support increased participation in OSHA’s Voluntary Protection Programs<sup>5</sup> to encourage cooperation between employers, employees, and OSHA in creating a safe and healthful work environment.

## **Federal Procurement and Contracting**

- Require Federal agencies and programs to implement Best Value Procurement (BVP) for wholly or partially Federally-funded projects. BVP is intended to avoid the lowest bid being the only or primary factor considered in awarding a contract. Instead, BVP includes several factors, in addition to price, such as:
  - a formal written workplace health and safety program
  - worker injury and illness statistics less than the industry average
  - participation in voluntary health and safety programs, such as OSHA’s Voluntary Protection Programs
  - management systems and effective contracting structures
  - client evaluation of workplace health and safety performance on previous contracts
  - utilization of professional safety and health coordinators
- Require Federal construction project contractors to implement a Buy Quiet program to reduce the risks of irreversible occupational hearing loss and associated costs. NIOSH provides a model program for businesses to follow.<sup>6</sup>

## **Resources**

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “Worker Rights. Position Statement.” 2021. <https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Position-Statements/Worker-Rights-Position-Statement.pdf>

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “Assessment and Remediation of Corrosive Drywall. Guidance Document.” 2018. [https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Assessment-and-Remediation-of-Corrosive-Drywall-Guidance-Document\\_200601\\_133250.pdf](https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Assessment-and-Remediation-of-Corrosive-Drywall-Guidance-Document_200601_133250.pdf)

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “Corrosive Drywall. White Paper.” 2018. <https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Corrosive-Drywall-White-Paper.pdf>

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “Focus Four for Health: An Initiative to Address Four Major Construction Health Hazards. Guidance Document.” 2019.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/vpp>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/buyquiet/component.html>

[https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/FocusFour-forHealth\\_GuidanceDocument.pdf](https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/FocusFour-forHealth_GuidanceDocument.pdf)

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “How to Improve the Safety Climate on Your Construction Site. Guidance Document.” 2017. <https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/How-to-Improve-the-Safety-Climate-on-Your-Construction-Site-Guidance-Document.pdf>

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “OHS Performance Criteria in Contracting and Procurement. Guidance Document.” 2020. <https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Guidance-Documents/OHS-Performance-Criteria-In-Contracting-and-Procurement-Guidance-Document.pdf>

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “PCBs in the Built Environment. White Paper.” 2013. [https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/PCBs-in-the-Built-Environment-White-Paper\\_200601\\_131633.pdf](https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/PCBs-in-the-Built-Environment-White-Paper_200601_131633.pdf)

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “Recommended Skills and Capabilities for Silica Competent Persons. White Paper.” 2019. [https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Recommended-Skills-and-Capabilities-for-Silica-Competent-Persons-White-Paper\\_200601\\_131702.pdf](https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Recommended-Skills-and-Capabilities-for-Silica-Competent-Persons-White-Paper_200601_131702.pdf)

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) Criteria for New Construction. White Paper.” 2017. [https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Volatile-Organic-Compounds-VOC-Criteria-for-New-Construction-White-Paper\\_200601\\_131730.pdf](https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Volatile-Organic-Compounds-VOC-Criteria-for-New-Construction-White-Paper_200601_131730.pdf)

American Industrial Hygiene Association. “Focus on Construction Health: COVID-19. Guidance Document.” 2020. [https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Guidance-Documents/Focus-on-Construction-Health-COVID-19\\_AIHAGuidanceDocument.pdf](https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Guidance-Documents/Focus-on-Construction-Health-COVID-19_AIHAGuidanceDocument.pdf)

U.S. Department of Labor. “Construction Focus Four Training.” [https://www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/construction/focus\\_four/](https://www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/construction/focus_four/)