Workers’ Memorial Day US



INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone. Today, let’s take a moment to talk about **Workers’ Memorial Day**, observed every year on **April 28th**. This date is dedicated to remembering those who tragically lost their lives or sustained serious injuries on the job, and it’s also a chance for us to renew our commitment to safer workplaces nationwide. I’d like to share a bit of history about this day, go over some key U.S. statistics, and highlight a personal story that shows why we should never take safety for granted.

A QUICK LOOK AT THE HISTORY

In the United States, **April 28th** holds special significance: it marks the date the **Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act)** took effect in 1971. Labor groups like the **AFL-CIO** recognized this date as **Workers’ Memorial Day**, transforming it into a national moment of reflection—one where we remember lost coworkers and loved ones, and renew our dedication to upholding safety protocols at work. The core idea is that **no job should ever cost someone their life**.

WHY THIS DAY MATTERS

Workers’ Memorial Day is really about two important things:

1. **Honoring Loss**: We pay respects to the men and women who left for work and never returned, as well as those who’ve been seriously injured or stricken by occupational illnesses.
1. **Strengthening Safety Culture**: By reflecting on these tragedies, we remind ourselves to stay vigilant, to follow (and improve) safety guidelines, and to encourage open dialogue about risks before they become irreversible incidents.

It’s a day that underscores how much we all need to look out for one another.

U.S. STATISTICS

Let’s consider some data from the **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)** to see why this observance remains crucial:

- In **2021**, there were **5,190** workplace deaths across the country—an average of **14 people** dying every single day due to job-related causes.
- Beyond these fatalities, there are countless serious injuries that disrupt lives, families, and communities.

- While initiatives by **OSHA** and other agencies have helped reduce rates over time, these numbers make it clear that dangers still exist, and our work to improve safety is far from over.

Remember that behind every number is a person—a parent, a sibling, or a friend.

A STORY THAT HITS HOME

To put a face to the statistics, I want to share a true account about **Michelle**, a 38-year-old warehouse employee in the Midwest. She was known for her helpful nature and friendly attitude. One day, a chain of small oversights involving a defective forklift alarm and a rush to fulfill an order ended in tragedy. Michelle was accidentally struck by the forklift and suffered fatal injuries. She left behind two young children.

Her coworkers recall how she was the person who'd always ask, 'Need a hand?' or volunteer for a tough shift. That kind of positivity is now sorely missed, and the team still feels her absence. Stories like Michelle's are reminders that even minor lapses in safety procedures can lead to heartbreak.

HOW TO HONOR APRIL 28th

Workers' Memorial Day gives us more than just a reason to look back—it pushes us to act. Here are some ways we can honor this day:

- **Moment of Silence**: Begin the workday by pausing to remember those who died.
- **Revisit Safety Measures**: Use April 28th as a prompt to check on everything from PPE standards to lockout/tagout rules to emergency response plans.
- **Foster Open Discussions**: Encourage coworkers to share concerns about near-misses or emerging hazards. A no-judgment culture means we catch issues faster.
- **Make Real Changes**: Whether it's improving the maintenance schedule for equipment or investing in new safety training, consider tangible improvements that can help prevent future tragedies.

CONCLUSION

Observing Workers' Memorial Day is both somber and inspiring. It's somber because we remember the lives cut short, like Michelle's, and inspiring because it fuels our resolve to protect every worker out there. By respecting safety measures, looking out for each other, and continually pushing to make our workplaces safer, we can honor those who aren't with us anymore. Thank you for listening and for joining this collective commitment to keep everyone safe on the job.