

THE DIRTY DOZEN 2018

Employers Who Put Workers
and Communities at Risk



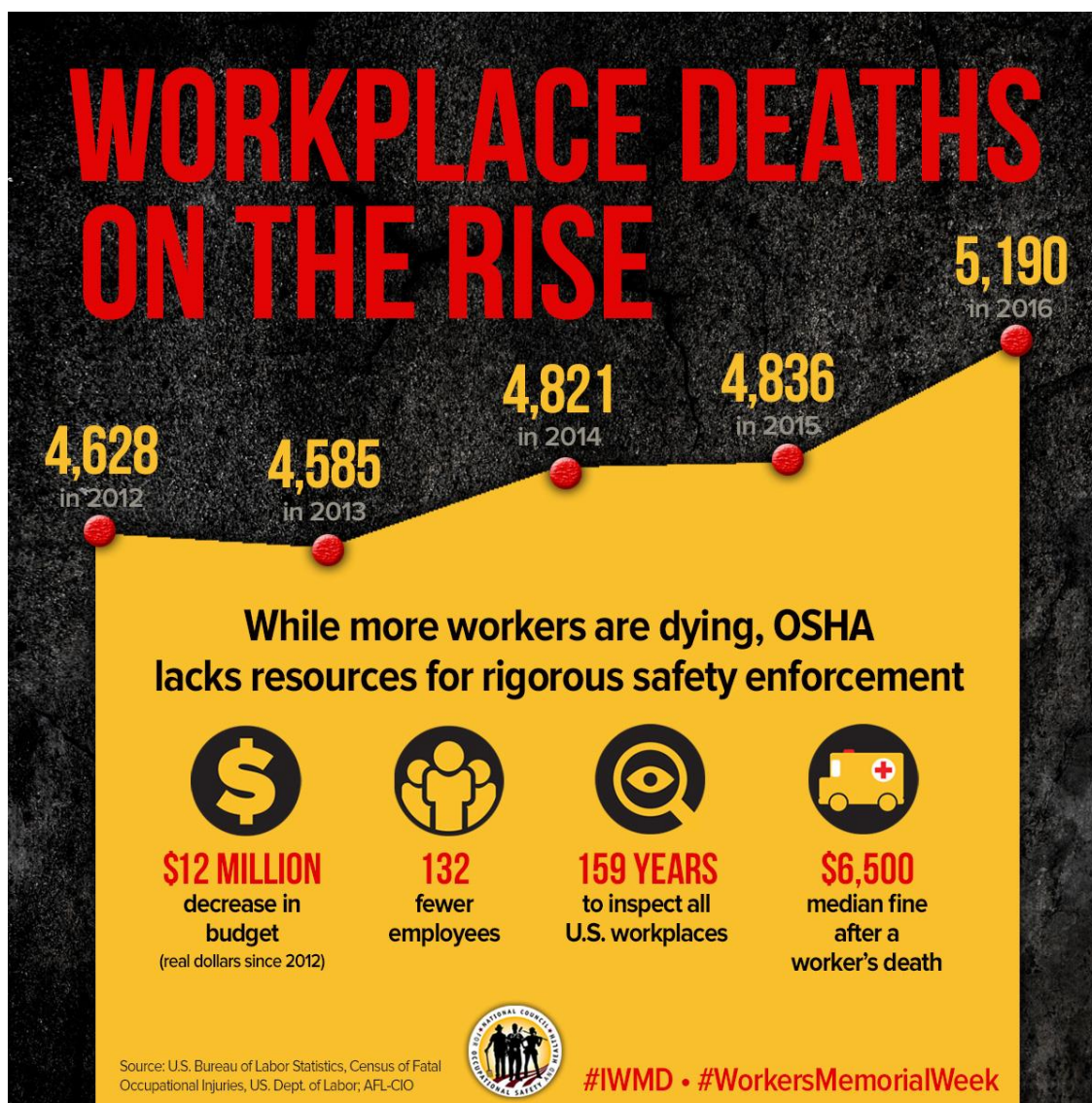
WORKERS' MEMORIAL WEEK • APRIL 23–30, 2018

Executive Summary

Workplace Deaths: On the rise in 2016

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 5,190 people died from workplace trauma in 2016, a seven percent increase from 2015 and a 12 percent increase over a five-year period dating back to 2012. During that same five-year period, the budget for the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration has declined by \$12 million.

Deeper cuts to the agency's budget and other safety programs were proposed for FY 2017 and 2018. After sustained and targeted advocacy by National COSH, local COSH groups, unions, worker centers and allies, however, a bipartisan majority in Congress agreed to avoid drastic cuts and maintain level funding for OSHA, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, and OSHA's Susan Harwood Training Grant Program.



Who is most at risk?

Tens of millions of workers in the U.S. suffer from unnecessary risks in the workplace because employers fail to observe well-documented safety practices. Some groups of workers, however, are more at risk than others. Latinx workers, immigrants, older workers and contract employees face particular challenges in the workplace and in 2015 each group counted for a significant share of U.S. workplace fatalities.

95,000 Deaths form Long-Term Exposure

In addition to more than 5,000 deaths from acute workplace trauma, an estimated 95,000 workers die annually in the U.S. from cancers, respiratory and circulatory diseases and other illnesses associated with long-term exposure in the workplace.

Flavoring Chemicals – A Hidden Danger

Flavoring chemicals used in food production are among the lesser-known hazards to workers. These substances can cause severe lung damage and have been linked to hundreds of injuries and at least five fatalities. The chemical **diacetyl** and related compounds are unregulated, and exposed workers are frequently misdiagnosed. National COSH and partner organizations are working to alert employers, unions workers and health professionals to the dangers of flavoring chemicals.

The Dirty Dozen

National COSH solicited information from our network of health and safety activists about companies that put workers and communities at risk. Criteria for inclusion included severity of injuries to workers; exposure to unnecessary and preventable risk; repeat citations by relevant state and federal authorities; and activity by workers to improve their health and safety conditions. Companies are listed in alphabetical order, with location as the firm's headquarters of record.

Amazon – Seattle, Washington

- **Seven workers killed at Amazon** warehouses since 2013 – including three workers within five weeks at three separate locations in 2017.
- Despite a pattern of preventable deaths, Amazon is requesting billions in tax breaks for a new headquarters, on top of \$1 billion already received from state, local taxpayers.

Case Farms – Troutman, North Carolina

- **74 OSHA violations per 1,000 employees** – more than four times higher than any other poultry firm.
- A pattern of hiring undocumented workers, then firing them when they are injured or stand up for better working conditions.

Dine Brands Global, Inc. (IHOP and Applebee's) – Glendale, California

- **Demands for sex, groping, threats of violence against workers.**
- More than 60 complaints about sexual and harassment and abuse.
- Eight lawsuits against IHOP and Applebee's, both owned by Dine Brands Global.

JK Excavating – Mason, Ohio

- **25-year old Zachary Hess buried alive** in December 2017.
- JK Excavating, a repeat offender, was cited by OSHA three times in 2014 for failure to protect workers from trench collapse.

Lowe's Home Improvement – Mooresville, North Carolina

- **56 U.S. deaths linked to exposure to paint strippers containing methylene chloride, including 17 workers who died while refinishing bathtubs.**
- The retail giant still sells products with this deadly substance, despite appeals from workers, consumers and families.

Lynnway Auto Auction – Billerica, Massachusetts

- **Five dead in preventable auto crash** – including a 37-year old mom working her first day on the job.
- Lynnway cited by OSHA and warned of vehicle safety hazards in 2014.

New York and Atlantic Railway – New York, New York

- **Workers suffer amputation, brain injury, impaired vision.**
- Immigrants workers face workplace discrimination; assigned to hazardous tasks without proper training and equipment.

Patterson UTI Energy – Houston, Texas

- **Five workers dead in an explosion** in Quinton, Oklahoma.
- 110 OSHA violations and 13 workers dead in the past decade.
- U.S. Senate: Patterson "one of the worst violators of workplace safety laws."

Saraband Farms – Sumas, Washington

- Farm worker dies after complaining of headaches.
- 70 co-workers go on strike to protest unsafe conditions.
- Strikers are fired from their jobs and evicted from company housing.

Tesla Motors – Fremont, California

- **Recordable injuries 31% higher than industry average;** serious injuries 83% higher.
- The company claims a recent improvement in injury rates – but an independent investigation shows Tesla has "failed to report some of its serious injuries ...making the company's injury numbers look better than they actually are."

Verla International – New Windsor, New York

- **Explosion kills a worker at cosmetics plant.**
- 125 workers injured, eight firefighters hospitalized.
- Company previously cited for poor handling of chemicals that led to deadly blaze; safety consultant says disaster was "easily preventable."

Waste Management – Houston, Texas

- **23-Year old worker killed at a recycling facility.**
- Company failed to lockout/tagout machinery during repairs.
- Waste Management, the nation's largest waste disposal company, has been cited more than 60 times by OSHA, resulting in nearly \$1 million in fines.