

Executive Safety Update

Fall 2011

OSHA Seeks Nominations for Members to Serve on National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced in today's [Federal Register](#) that nominations are being accepted to serve on the 12 member National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH).

NACOSH was established under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 to advise the Secretaries of Labor and Health and Human Services on matters relating to the administration of the Act.

Nominations will be accepted for representatives in the following categories: public, management, labor, occupational safety and occupational health. Members will serve a two-year term.

Nominations may be submitted electronically at www.regulations.gov, the Federal eRulemaking Portal, or by facsimile at 202-693-1948. If submitting nominations by mail, hand delivery or messenger service, send three copies to the OSHA Docket Office, Room N-2625, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20210; telephone 202-693-2350. Nominations must be submitted no later than November 28, 2011.

Questions concerning the NACOSH nominations process can be addressed to Deborah Crawford, OSHA Directorate of Evaluation and Analysis, at 202-693-1932.

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New Guidance Document Helps Construction Employers and Workers Prevent Nail Gun Injuries

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have developed new guidance, [*Nail Gun Safety – A Guide for Construction Contractors*](#)^{*}, to help construction employers and workers prevent work-related nail gun injuries.

"Nail gun injuries are responsible for approximately 37,000 emergency room visits annually. In some cases, workers have died from their injuries," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "This document will help construction employers make necessary changes to improve nail gun safety and protect their workers from preventable injuries and death."

"NIOSH is pleased to partner with OSHA in presenting effective, evidence-based guidance for safer nail gun use," said NIOSH Director John Howard, M.D.

Construction workers, particularly those in residential construction, use nail guns nearly every day. Although this tool is easy to operate and increases productivity, there have been reports of internal and external bodily injuries. These injuries occur as a result of unintended nail discharge; nails that bounce off a hard surface or miss the work piece and become airborne; and disabling the gun's safety features, among other causes. Injury prevention is possible if contractors take steps such as using full sequential trigger nail guns; establishing nail gun work procedures; and providing workers with personal protective equipment.

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OSHA Publishes New Educational Materials on Working Safely During Trenching Operations

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) today released three new guidance products to educate workers and employers about the hazards workers face in trenching operations. Unprotected trenches are among the deadliest hazards in the construction industry and the loss of life is devastating: since 2003, more than 200 workers have died in trench cave-ins, and hundreds more have been seriously injured.

"No worker's life should end in a trench. Cave-ins during excavations are some of the most common and grisliest causes of worker fatalities in construction, yet they are entirely preventable," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "I am deeply troubled by the continued violations of OSHA's trenching standards, many of which bring tragic results. These new educational materials provide clear guidance on the necessary steps that employers must take to protect workers in trenches."

The new information products, which are available on [OSHA's Publications page](#), include:

- "[Trenching and Excavation](#)" [fact sheet](#)* – an overview of the hazards that can occur while performing trenching operations and the safety measures required to protect workers;
- "[Working Safely in Trenches](#)" [QuickCard](#)* – an easy-to-use guide to trenching hazards and safety measures with graphics; and
- "[Do Not Enter an Unprotected Trench!](#)" [poster](#)* – a resource for construction workplaces informing workers what steps must be taken to ensure trench safety, along with the warning "An Unprotected Trench is an Early Grave."

Subjects covered in the three documents include proper shoring and sloping; evaluations by competent persons; means of access/egress; atmospheric hazard testing; and protective systems. The guidance also describes the protective measures that are required under OSHA's excavation standards ([29 CFR 1926.650](#), [29 CFR 1926.651](#), and [29 CFR 1926.652](#)). Spanish-language versions of the documents are also available.

Because of the severity of trenching hazards, OSHA conducts a Special Emphasis Program on Trenching and Excavations ([Directive CPL 02-00-069 \[CPL 2.69\]](#)), which sets procedures for enforcement activities wherever trenching and excavation worksites are observed. When OSHA's compliance officers see a trench, they will inspect a trench. On two separate occasions in the past year, this Special Emphasis Program allowed OSHA compliance officers to remove workers from unsupported trenches minutes before they collapsed – likely preventing possible injury and loss of life.