



# Hudson River Valley Chapter Newsletter

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## Useful & Helpful Links

<http://www.assp.org>

*Link to the National ASSP webpage for information on great topics in EH&S. Go look things up.*

<http://hudsonrivervalley.assp.org>

*Link to the Hudson River Valley Chapter web page. Information on the Local items and events as well as good information. Try it, you'll like it!*

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

*Link to the Center for Disease Control. Great current information on health items to help protect us all through illness controlling and prevention. Lots of good items!*

Hotlinks in articles are in **Bold Red font**.

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## Site-Specific Targeting of Workplaces Updated.

OSHA announced on December 16, 2020 that it is updating its inspection program directing enforcement resources to establishments with the highest injury/illness rates.

The **Site-Specific Targeting (SST) Directive** is the primary targeting program for non-construction establishments with 20 or more employees. Establishments are selected based on injury and illness data employers submitted on Form 300A for calendar years 2017-2019.

The new directive replaces Site-Specific Targeting 2016, and includes the following significant changes:

- ❖ The creation of a new targeting category for establishments indicating consistent injury/illness rate increases over the three year data collection period, and
- ❖ Allows records only inspections to occur when a compliance safety and health officer determines incorrect data led to an establishment's inclusion in the program. This change ensures OSHA will conduct a full inspection only when the employer has an actual elevated injury and illness experience.

In addition to the SST program, OSHA implements both national and local emphasis programs to target high-risk hazards and industries. Learn more about these **emphasis programs**.

OSHA's **On-Site Consultation Program** offers no-cost and confidential occupational safety and health services to small and medium sized businesses to identify workplace hazards, provide advice for compliance with OSHA standards, and assist in establishing and improving safety and health programs. On-site Consultation services are separate from enforcement and do not result in penalties or citations.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to help ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance.

## OSHA's COVID-19 Guidance for Stockroom and Loading Dock Workers.

The following tips can help reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus among stockroom or loading dock workers, as well as other retail workers, who perform tasks that do not involve frequent interaction with the public:

- ❖ Encourage workers to stay home if they are sick.
- ❖ Stock displays (e.g. shelves, freezers) during slow periods or shifts during which stores are closed to minimize contact with the public.
- ❖ If stocking occurs while stores are open, use barriers or markers to physically separate employees from customers.
- ❖ Maintain at least six feet between co-workers and customers, where possible.
- ❖ Limit customer capacity in stores.
- ❖ Coordinate with vendors and delivery companies to minimize the need for stockroom and loading dock workers to have contact with delivery drivers.
- ❖ Allow workers to wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent the spread of the virus.
- ❖ Discourage sharing of tools or equipment. Disinfect tools that must be shared after each use.
- ❖ Provide a place to wash hands and alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- ❖ Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and equipment with Environmental Protection Agency-approved cleaning chemicals from [List N](#) or that have label claims against the coronavirus.
- ❖ Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns.

For more information, visit [www.osha.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus) or call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742).

## Communications Towers Construction & Maintenance Workers Safety.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have signed a national strategic partnership with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and NATE: The Communications Infrastructure Contractors Association. The partnership is intended to improve worker safety in the communications tower erection industry.

"The demand for wireless communications and broadcast services has increased the need for construction, service, and maintenance of towers throughout the country," said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor Loren Sweatt. "The partners will work together to focus resources on eliminating hazards and improving the safety and health of tower workers. This work has become even more important as America's workers rely on wireless technology in all industries."

The [three-year partnership](#) seeks to eliminate injuries and fatalities among workers performing wireless and telecommunications, tower erection, and maintenance operations. The partnership will address some of the industry's frequently encountered hazards, including falls from height, electricity, falling objects, tower collapses, and inclement weather.

"Tower technicians do the hard, often gritty work to build, maintain and upgrade broadband networks throughout the country. The pandemic has further demonstrated everything our wireless workforce does to keep Americans connected, and it is imperative that we do everything we can to keep them safe," stated Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai. "As the United States ramps up its 5G rollout, this national partnership agreement will only become more important. The FCC looks forward to working with OSHA and NATE to ensure the safe buildout of wireless infrastructure."

"The timing of this national partnership agreement is critical as the association's member companies and their technician workforce are on the front lines deploying the next generation technologies and broadband infrastructure that are simultaneously enabling a 5G future and helping close the digital divide," said NATE Chairman Jimmy Miller. "The Association looks forward to partnering with U.S. Department of Labor and the FCC in order to elevate and enhance the industry's safety culture and keep our workers healthy."

## UPDATE: OSHA Announces \$3,646,228 In Coronavirus Violations.

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic through December 10, 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued many citations arising from inspections for violations relating to coronavirus, resulting in violations that totaled \$3,646,228 from 273 inspections. OSHA inspections have resulted in the agency citing employers for violations, including failures to:

- Implement a **written respiratory protection program**;
- Provide a medical evaluation, respirator fit test, training on the proper use of a respirator and personal protective equipment;
- **Report** an injury, illness or fatality;
- Record an injury or illness on OSHA **recordkeeping forms**; and
- Comply with the **General Duty Clause** of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

OSHA has already announced citations relating to the coronavirus arising out of 263 inspections, which can be found at **dol.gov/newsroom**. In addition to those inspections, 10 inspections from December 4 to December 10 have resulted in coronavirus-related citations totaling \$141,883 from OSHA relating to one or more of the violations from those inspections. OSHA provides more information about individual citations at its **Establishment Search website**, which it updates periodically.

A full list of what standards were cited for each establishment, as well as the inspection number – **are available here**. An OSHA standards database can be found **here**.

Resources are available on the agency's **COVID-19 webpage** to help employers comply with these standards.

## Psychological Safety is Part of a Safe Workplace.

In addressing workplace safety, Environmental, Health and Safety professionals often begin with ensuring physical safety for their co-workers and businesses. However, that's only the beginning of creating a safe place to work.

A safe work environment not only protects lives and livelihoods, it provides a place where all employees can feel emotionally and mentally safe.

Employee well-being and psychological safety is as important as ensuring people are physically safe on the job. Psychological, social and emotional factors can distract or impact employees mentally, which can lead to physical safety and health issues. Moreover, mental well-being is a critical component of overall worker health and safety. It's up to business leaders to put employees' mental health and safety on an equal level with physical safety.

The challenges we have experienced this year, from the COVID-19 pandemic to a reckoning around racial justice, have put strains and stresses on our families and employees and led us to recognize that we cannot truly be safe until we feel safe. We know that when people go to work, they can't always leave these stressors behind. Creating a holistic approach to safety is one way leaders can engage and reach all employees, ensuring individuals feel a sense of belonging and inclusion and are free to contribute their best ideas without fear of negative consequences.

Improving psychological safety in addition to physical safety protects our ability to speak up, share ideas and opinions, learn new skills, and challenge the status quo. It also encourages employees to seek support when experiencing mental health distress – a necessity, as more than 40% of Americans are reporting elevated levels of mental health distress in conjunction with the pandemic.

Addressing employee mental health concerns is a pillar of the National Safety Council's **SAFER: Safe Actions for Employee Returns** effort to help employees navigate workplace safety during the pandemic. Creating a workplace culture that openly acknowledges these risks, reduces stigma and supports employees

## Psychological Safety is Part of a Safe Workplace (Continued).

is so important. The workplace can significantly impact employee mental health and be a place of care and support.

The main barrier to psychological safety in the workplace is the lack of awareness about how to create the right environment and that all starts with how people are treated in the workplace. It should be every business leader's goal to create a workplace environment where every employee feels accepted, respected and valued for their contributions.

Beginning to understand and address behaviors or actions that may lead to an environment that is not as psychologically safe as it could be may require difficult conversations about the steps we are or are not taking to ensure inclusion and addressing inherent biases. Although we can't fully control our environment – especially during a pandemic – we can foster an inclusive, psychologically safe workplace by observing the actions of those around us, listening more closely and considering other perspectives that may challenge our own inherent biases.

Keeping psychological safety top of mind involves:

- ❖ Responding with respect when interacting with co-workers and clients
- ❖ Asking for and considering the opinions and perspectives of others
- ❖ Courageously speaking up if you observe someone who isn't creating a psychologically safe environment
- ❖ Encouraging employees to seek support when needed

Ensuring psychological safety makes it possible for everyone to bring their best selves to work. When we get everyone to contribute, our workplaces and our communities not only survive, but thrive – safely. We must challenge ourselves and each other to do better, so that we create a truly safe place to work for all.

This article from National Safety Council's Speaker Spotlight – Lorraine M. Martin, November 2020.

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## Chapter Chatter

Our last Joint Virtual Technical Meetings were on December 15, 2020 with Hudson Valley Federal Field Safety and Health Council, and on December 17, 2020 with ASSP New York City Chapter. Our Next scheduled Joint Virtual Technical Meeting is on January 28, 2021 with the ASSP New York City Chapter and the topic of "Industrial Hygiene, a Basic Introduction" will be presented by Mr. Ken Eck of QUEST Environmental Services with a start time of 12:00 Noon.

### Thought Of The Day:

"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." – Mother Theresa

Minutes of all chapter meetings and all newsletters are published on our chapter webpage for you to read if you want to see what is covered during these meetings, or items in those newsletters. These are available for as far back as 2016. We have posted many of the Presentations from past Technical Meetings as well. This is the link to the files page on our website for you to review these chapter documents:

<https://hudsonrivervalley.assp.org/files/>.

Once again the Hudson River Valley Chapter is undergoing a mailing list update. If you have a different email address than the one you used to join the ASSP, please let us know which one you would prefer to be used for chapter mailings.

Stay safe, and stay healthy. Hopefully we can meet face to face soon. If needed for any questions you may have about our Chapter activities, my email address is: [cvondietsch@yahoo.com](mailto:cvondietsch@yahoo.com)