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 **DIRECTOR OF SAFETY SERVICES MESSAGE**

**September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month**  
**Joe Whiteman**

At ASCC we take a pro-active approach to fatigue, mental health, and wellness. In fact, these initiatives are strategic goals that result in resources for members. The Safety and Risk Management Council (SRMC) has a task group dedicated to working specifically on these topics.

On the mental health front, ASCC has enlisted industry experts, along with tapping internal resources, to help start the conversation, provide awareness, and develop guidance and tools. For those of you that attended last year's Annual Conference, you may have heard Mike Schneider's presentation on mental health. It was filled with information, statistics, and best practices that companies can implement to reduce mental health-related challenges. In July, Mike presented on a similar topic at the Construction Executive Leadership Forum, including talking about suicide in

the construction industry. The overall response was that we all have a lot of work to do to help minimize this tragedy.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and like many of the safety and health awareness campaigns, this one deserves our utmost attention. According to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), workers in construction have the second-highest suicide rate of all occupational groups. Men in construction die by suicide at a rate three and a half times higher than the general population, as cited in an ENR article "Construction Fatalities Up in 2018, Fatality Rate Unchanged." When you contrast that with OSHA's "Fatal Four" Leading Causes of Fatalities in the Workplace (falls, struck by object, electrocution and caught between), the disparity between the two is almost five times higher for suicide-related deaths.

We need to normalize the discussion around mental health and suicide prevention. The more we talk, the more people become aware and comfortable to speak out, and, in many cases, seek help. As we approach September keep an eye out for ASCC resources to learn more about suicide prevention and opportunities for you to participate in Suicide Prevention Awareness Month within your own organization. It can be as easy as having a simple conversation. For more information contact Joe Whiteman, director of safety services at [jwhiteman@asconline.org](mailto:jwhiteman@asconline.org).



## THE LATEST

### ***OSHA Cracks Down on Trenching & Excavation Fatalities*** ***Joe Whiteman, director of safety services***

If you subscribe to OSHA's email news or their "Quick Takes DYK" (Did You Know) newsletters, the following information should come as no surprise. The unfortunate news is that even though there is a National Emphasis Program (NEP) for trenching and excavation, we have not seen a decrease in fatalities related to these activities. In the first six months of this year we have already surpassed the number of trench and excavation related fatalities in 2021.

Last year there were 15 fatalities. As of June 2022 there have been 22. This has prompted OSHA to become even more aggressive; launching "enhanced enforcement initiatives" to help change the trajectory of this trend. OSHA is calling all employers to immediately review trench and excavation related activities to confirm required protections are in place. They have even recommended that states that have their own plans to institute an emphasis, and criminal referrals for trench related incidents.

It is safe to assume that OSHA will be more present on projects throughout the remainder of the year. They are expected to perform over one thousand trench and excavation related inspections across the country. Even if your scope of work is not trench and excavation related, the potential for a programmed visit by OSHA is far greater, as other trades may be performing T & E. If OSHA sees an unsafe act or condition related to your work, don't be surprised if they start asking questions.

Now is the time to review your trenching and excavation activities. Ensure your employees are trained on the hazards related to the tasks and all required protections are in place. Fatalities related to these activities are preventable and there should be little excuse, as the prescribed methods to control these hazards are readily available. Let's do our part and help spread awareness on this topic.

[ASCC's Job Hazard Analysis Document on Excavations & Trenches](#)



## WHAT'S WORKING

### ***A Seismic Shift in Safety: Contractors Addressing Mental Health and Wellbeing*** ***Cal Beyer and Jason McMurry, Holmes Murphy***

The demands of construction field work create challenges for worker wellbeing and mental health. Consider the effects of long commutes and travel to jobsites, physical exhaustion, sleep deprivation, fatigue from overtime, and muscular-skeletal injuries that lead to chronic pain. Then add the pressures of workforce shortages, demanding schedules, supply chain disruptions, and rising costs of living.

Workers today are caught in a vice grip of stress. Fortunately, a growing number of concrete contractors are addressing worker wellbeing in the field. The efforts of three leading concrete contractors are featured below:

**Alberici Constructors (St. Louis, MO): Shifting from Physical Safety to Holistic Wellbeing**  
Safety Director Bo Cooper shares the “shift away from only giving technical talks about worker safety.” To Cooper, “the rules and procedures remain important, but we’re now taking a more humanistic approach with safety talks and communication.” Cooper teaches “how to keep an eye out for coworkers headed for a crisis.” This includes “what stress looks and feels like, and how to de-escalate conflict.”

Cooper says, “companies who value worker wellbeing are transforming construction safety because when workers feel we care more about them as a whole, getting them to follow rules or procedures is easier.” To Cooper, the “real dividend for workers is the creation of a thriving safety culture.”

The best benefit of incorporating holistic health and wellbeing into construction safety programs and practices, Cooper said, is “feeling great knowing we are connecting with workers regarding what they may be going through outside of work.” Cooper shares how personal this connection becomes as workers embrace what the company is doing to reduce stress and improve mental health.

“After each talk I give on suicide prevention, inevitably a few come up and approach me to say they appreciate that mental health and suicide prevention are finally being addressed. Often they tell me they lost someone close who chose to take their own life. They wish they had been more aware of the signs leading up to it.”

#### **Baker Concrete (Monroe, OH): Managing Fatigue is Key to Worker Wellbeing**

Chief People Person Mike Schneider shared that Baker Concrete is one of the charter sponsors of Safety Week, and how back-to-back themes helped advance worker wellbeing. Schneider said the 2021 theme, “Committed to Holistic Safety,” was well received. “It meshed well with our Incident and Injury Free culture.” Schneider emphasized how “it showed how healthy minds and bodies and strong relationships are imperative to improved safety results.”

Schneider shared how the 2022 theme, “United in Safety,” “showed the importance of supporting each other through teamwork and strong relationships.” To Schneider, this theme reinforced that “safety is a team effort, all workers are accountable to each other, and we are our brother’s and sister’s keeper.”

Schneider shared that Baker has expanded measures to reduce fatigue by focusing on health and wellness. Areas of emphasis include encouraging proper hydration and nutrition, as well as physical safety measures, including shade shelters and ventilation fans when necessary.

Schneider states that “co-workers are encouraged to observe each other for signs of fatigue, lack of focus, and inattention to detail so workers take appropriate rest and hydration breaks.” Baker Concrete has been proactively managing overtime to ensure workers have adequate time for rest. Demanding schedules, combined with the shortage of craft labor, increase overtime hours. The company continues to hold honest conversations with owners about the challenges of demanding schedules.

#### **Miller & Long (Bethesda, MD): Tackling Gaps in the Behavioral Healthcare System**

Deborah Carr, Vice President of Insurance, shares how reducing stigma and expanding awareness of mental health is not enough. “It is important for employers to build and maintain trust with employees who do not always feel comfortable openly asking for guidance or support with mental and behavioral health issues.” Carr states that “sometimes an employee’s hesitancy to ask for or accept help stems from being concerned they might not get the desired support from their families.”

Contractors are increasingly reporting challenges and gaps in the existing behavioral health care system. Carr states that “the lack of available service providers at a time of need is a real concern.” She also highlights the challenges of finding a sufficient number of bilingual counselors and providers for adolescent dependents on health plans.

Carr asserted the goal of Miller & Long is “to establish relationships and build-out its own integrated network of behavioral health service providers that can provide effective services and solutions to our workers and their families in a timely manner.” The company’s internal service partners hold monthly meetings to discuss long-term planning and identify needed resources to ensure that the wellbeing program is a success and that all workers benefit. Carr likened this customized approach to the process she used to build a trusted network of medical and support specialists to help in the treatment and rehabilitation of Workers Compensation injuries.

Contractors should understand the services and provider options in Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and employee benefit plans. Verifying EAP providers are in-network is an important detail to help avoid disruptions in service once employees or dependents use their free visits. Contractors may need to expand their provider network or eliminate co-pays for out-of-network providers to help ensure workers and families have access to care.

### **Recommended Action Steps**

1. Discuss mental health and wellbeing as a senior leadership team. Conduct an honest self-assessment of your company’s current commitment and efforts.
2. Create a simple strategy to develop a mentally healthy culture. Focus on sharing resources with employees and family members.
3. Expand the knowledge of managers and first-line supervisors on how to address wellbeing in the workplace. Offer training on mental and behavioral health literacy.

### **Resources:**

1. [Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#)
2. [Building a Caring Culture: Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
3. [Mental Health and Well-Being in Construction Pulse Survey](#)

### **Author Biographies:**

**Cal Beyer**, CWP is vice president of workforce risk and worker wellbeing for Holmes Murphy. He has over 30 years as a construction risk management, safety, and wellness practitioner. Beyer helped launch the mental health and suicide prevention movement in the construction industry in 2014. Contact Beyer at [cbeyer@holmesmurphy.com](mailto:cbeyer@holmesmurphy.com) or 651-307-7883.

**Jason McMurray**, ARM, CRIS, is a client executive with Holmes Murphy, providing risk management and insurance services for contractors across the country. He is experienced in multiple geographic regions and all construction sectors. Contact McMurray at [jmcmurray@holmesmurphy.com](mailto:jmcmurray@holmesmurphy.com) or 515-223-7092.



## **SAFETY RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT**

### ***ASCC Safety Consulting Services***

Did you know that ASCC offers [safety consulting services](#) to members? Take advantage of comprehensive safety evaluations of your written program, safety leadership and/or field operations. All evaluations are performed by ASCC’s director of safety services, providing an objective approach with concrete construction experience and knowledge of industry best practices to help members ensure their safety program is compliant, working, and up to date.

There are several options available to best fit your organization’s needs. These include written program review, Silica Dust Generating Activities Program Assessment, or On-Site Safety and Risk Assessment performed in person on your jobsite(s). As conditions settle from the pandemic and travel is normalizing, now is a perfect time to take advantage of an on-site safety evaluation. For more information, contact ASCC director of safety services, Joseph Whiteman at [jwhiteman@asconline.org](mailto:jwhiteman@asconline.org).



## HARD HATS TO HELMETS

### ***Alberici Constructors Changes to Helmets*** ***Kathleen Dobson, safety director***

Edward Bullard is credited with the invention of the hard hat over 100 years ago. For the most part, the design hasn't really changed all that much. There have been improvements, such as electrical resistance, reverse donning, and adapting to allow attachments such as face shields and earmuffs, but the overall design and function have remained relatively the same.

Currently, head protection must meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z89.1 (USA), Standards Council of Canada (CSA) Z94.1 (Canada) or European EN12492 standards. Head protection may not meet all three, so contractors need to be diligent regarding selection based on their needs.

A new innovation to the industry - the alpine-style helmet-is gathering more and more traction. This helmet is similar to those used by mountain climbers or cyclists, and we are keenly aware it is the next generation of protective headgear. Unlike traditional hard hats, which have a suspension system designed to distribute the force of an impact to the top, helmets are designed to take the force of an impact from several directions, including top, front, rear, and portions of the sides. The addition of an integral chin strap helps secure the helmet to the head in the event of a fall - aiding in reduction of traumatic brain injuries resulting from the head striking objects on the way down or upon contact.

Alberici Constructors is a diversified construction company recognized for its safe work, superior quality, and customer service. With operations throughout North America and clients around the world, the company offers general contracting, construction management and design-build solutions, as well as the ability to self-perform key components of their projects. They work across a broad spectrum of industrial and commercial markets and are ranked as the 30th largest construction company in the United States by Engineering News-Record. Alberici is signatory to several of the building trades and is a proud union supporter of those organizations.

Early in 2019, as part of our zero-incident safety culture, Alberici set out to improve its head protection program by evaluating a number of manufacturer's helmets, then brainstorming with a group including safety representatives, trade representatives, and craft leaders, as well as upper management. In mid-2020 they made a corporate-wide decision to change from the traditional hard hat to an alpine style helmet, and in April 2021, all field employees were issued new, branded helmets.

More and more manufacturers have brought the alpine-style helmet to market, but among the more well-known is an Italian company, KASK. A popular choice in the construction and industrial maintenance industries is either the KASK Zenith or Zenith XL helmet. They offer many color options and attachable accessories such as face shields, visors, and hearing protection. After much deliberation and discussion with all the manufacturers, Alberici chose the KASK Zenith XL. The company is very happy with its decision, though it was a tough choice to decide which helmet to roll out to the workforce.

Alberici acknowledges that helmets are not inexpensive compared to the traditional hard hat. However, after having an employee suffer a severe head injury during a fall where his hard hat flew off, it was an easy decision to better protect our workers. "The traditional hard hat is good, but if there's something better on the market, it's our responsibility as employers to find it and incorporate it into our work processes," noted John Alberici, chairman emeritus. "Further, if we can save one person from a traumatic brain injury, the value to that person and their family is immeasurable."

The life span of the helmet is longer than the traditional hard hat, one way we see some cost savings over time with the new headgear. Regardless, the overall performance and increased protection is why we made the change.

To see more on Alberici's switch to helmets, scan this QR code and watch their YouTube video:



### ***Helmet Heads***

If your company is wearing helmets and you're not on this list, please email [Bev](mailto:Bev).

Adjustable Concrete Construction  
Albanelli Cement Contractors  
Alberici  
Barton Malow  
Belfast Valley Contractors  
Birmingham Decorative Concrete  
California Engineering Contractors  
Ceco Concrete Construction  
Century Concrete  
Charles Pankow Builders  
Coloscapes  
Concreate  
Concrete Strategies  
DPR Construction  
Fessler/Bowman  
GH Phipps Construction Cos.  
Hensel Phelps  
Hyde Concrete  
Industrial Caulk and Seal  
Joseph J. Albanese  
Kent Companies  
Largo Concrete

Lloyd Concrete Services  
Martin Concrete Construction  
McGillicuddy Concrete  
Mike Payne & Associates  
MK Concrete Construction  
Neuber Concrete  
Phaze Concrete  
Poppoff, Inc.  
PROCON, Inc.  
Ruttura & Sons Const. Co.  
Somero Enterprises  
STRUCTURAL  
Surfacing Solutions  
Swinerton Builders  
The Art of Concrete  
Trademark Concrete Systems  
Turner Brothers  
Webcor Concrete  
Wm. Winkler Co.  
Woodland Tilt-Up  
Z Con, LLC

### ***Safety Moment*** ***Rick Stone, Madison Concrete***

Our company recently experienced a rash of incidents. Of those, seven were recordables. As we reviewed the incidents to identify contributing factors and root causes, and develop mitigating controls, we realized that four started out as simple cuts and scrapes; onsite-treated, first-aid injuries. Subsequently, all four developed infections, requiring visits to the clinic and prescription antibiotics, thus becoming recordables.

Please remember that even though initially minor, cut or scrape injuries that are inadequately treated or not properly monitored throughout the healing process can easily turn into more severe injuries. Ensure your employees know to report all injuries, including simple cuts and scrapes, and that first-aid supplies are readily accessible. Review CPR/First-Aid training and confirm it incorporates training for care of these types of injuries. These are simple steps you can take to

guarantee better injury management and avoid unnecessary recordable injuries, while making certain your employees are getting the care they deserve.



## EVENTS

### **ASCC Safety Roundtables**

All roundtables are at 2 pm Central.

August 24 – Meeting the Demands of Production and Attracting the Right Employees: Influencing and Maintaining a Safe Mindset

September 21 – Suicide Prevention Awareness Month: Are We Having the Right Conversations?

October 19 – Medical and Recreational Marijuana in the Construction Industry: Best Practices for This Challenge

[Register](#)

### **Safety Summit**

November 10-11, 2022

Courtyard Albuquerque Airport

Albuquerque, NM

[Register](#)



## BOOKSTORE




This manual was prepared by ASCC's Safety Council to help contractors develop and implement a basic safety management plan that can be customized to meet the needs of individual companies. The Plan covers policy statements, safety responsibilities, inspections, accident investigation, safety meetings, rules, training, recordkeeping, first aid, emergency planning, hazard communication, concrete construction, electrical safety, fall protection, confined spaces, lockout / tagout, scaffolding, trenching and excavating, and substance abuse. Includes numerous sample forms and tags. [Purchase in our bookstore.](#)


### **Safety Products & Services**



**ASCC Safety & Insurance Hotline**

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