A construction worker wearing a yellow hard hat, a high-visibility red and blue safety vest, and white work gloves is working on a steel structure. The worker is seen from the back, looking towards a large window or glass facade. The scene is set against a blue sky with some clouds.

THE WORLD-  
**Spectator**

**Occupational  
Health & Safety  
2025**



# The origin of NAOOSH Week

North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week was first launched in June 1997, by an agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico.

The Canadian Society of Safety Engineering's (CSSE) Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week (COHS) had been observed from 1986-1996. During the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) talks between the governments of Mexico, United States, and Canada, workplace safety within the boundaries of all three nations was discussed by government labour department representatives. Canada suggested to the Mexican and American counterparts that their countries may wish to become involved in a similar endeavour to COHS Week.

As a result, CSSE was approached for permission and support to expand the COHS Week format and experience to Mexico and the United States. The proposal was formalized with the CSSE Board of Directors in 1996 and it was agreed that CSSE would adopt the North American concept and implement it in place of the Canadian Week. Labour Canada agreed to ensure that CSSE was the officially recognized safety organization responsible for North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week.

The agreement was taken to the 1996 NAFTA meeting and NAOOSH Week was established.

### National partners

Over the years, national partners joined CSSE to champion injury and illness prevention and raise awareness of the importance of workplace health and safety. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has this mission embedded in its mandate and purpose and has been a strong supporter of NAOOSH Week since it began. Threads of Life supports the families who have been impacted by a workplace illness, injury or death, and as a national partner, reminds us all why it's so important that we continue working to protect the health, safety and well-being of workers.

### Name change

In 2019, the partners recognized the importance of expanding the goals and efforts of NAOOSH Week beyond the world of occupational health and safety.

To be more inclusive, they agreed that the name should be clear and easily understood by everyone. The name was changed to Safety and Health Week and the transition to the new branding began.

The goal during Safety and Health Week remains to focus employers, employees, partners and the public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home, and in the community.

Together, we can create safer workplaces and communities.

OCCUPATIONAL  
HEALTH AND  
SAFETY WEEK



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**OCCUPATIONAL  
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## Safety at work is a team effort

Occupational health and safety is an area of growing concern for many businesses. After all, healthy employees make for productive employees. But achieving and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is a team effort.

From inspecting the work site itself to the equipment and tools used, from respecting safety norms to preventing accidents, it is up to each and every member of the team to minimize work-related accidents. Knowing how to identify and correct potential causes of work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities is vital to all businesses. Caution is not a luxury; it's a necessity.

With that in mind, an increasing number of businesses are taking a more proactive stance on improving workplace safety. Many of them proudly post their number of "accident-free" days, months or years. By taking adequate measures, these businesses have made their workplace safer for all employees. Whether their staff has to confront chemical, biological or physical risks, a

growing number of businesses are finding new and innovative ways of minimizing these potential dangers.

Planning is a vital part of any successful occupational health and safety program. To implement such programs, companies often establish committees whose members are in tune with employee concerns. This insight allows them to effectively inspect risk control systems, such as

the use of safety equipment and the establishment of emergency regulations and procedures. These inspections allow them to then recommend the appropriate steps to improve the situation.

Most companies realize that they can do more to improve the occupational health and safety of their workers, whether it is improving employees' work posture or minimizing the strain of repetitive motion.



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# Safety starts with all of us: Building safer workplaces in Saskatchewan

As Safety and Health Week is recognized across the province, WorkSafe Saskatchewan, the injury prevention partnership between the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, is calling attention to the strides made in improving workplace safety and the work still ahead to prevent injuries and save lives.

Today, Saskatchewan workplaces are safer than ever before. The Total injury rate of 3.91 per 100 workers was a historic low in 2024, declining for the second straight year. In fact, since WorkSafe Saskatchewan was established in 2002, the Total injury rate has dropped by more than 65 per cent. Similarly, in 2024, the province recorded its lowest Time Loss injury rate ever at 1.72 per 100 workers. For the fifth year in a row, 90 per cent of Saskatchewan workplaces reported zero injuries and zero fatalities.

"This new historic low in our Total injury rate represents the focus and hard work of workers, employers, safety associations, safety leaders across the province and labour to enable worker safety in Saskatchewan," said Gord Dobrowolsky, WCB chair. "Safety starts with us on every job, every shift. It is our combined efforts that continue to reduce injury rates. While these numbers are heading

in the right direction, even one injury is too many."

In 2024, 27 workers lost their lives due to work-related incidents or illnesses. Each of these tragedies leaves behind grieving families, friends, coworkers and communities. Every year in the province, approximately 2,400 workers suffer serious injuries. Between 11 and 15 per cent of all claims in the province continue to be serious injury claims, which make up more than 80 per cent of the costs to the Saskatchewan compensation system.

"While workplace injuries and fatalities in Saskatchewan are decreasing, we must never forget that workplace fatalities still tragically impact spouses, children, families, workplaces and communities every year," said Dobrowolsky. "This must drive us to continually work toward making workplaces safe for every Saskatchewan worker."

To further the province's efforts in eliminating workplace fatalities and serious injuries, in 2023, WorkSafe Saskatchewan launched the 2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy. The strategy is enhancing efforts to reduce injuries and fatalities through new regulatory, enforcement, prevention and learning initiatives. It is largely focused on three priority industries that include high-risk work. Those industries are health care, transportation and construction.

"This strategy is playing an important role in helping us to implement initiatives that act to prevent injuries and fatalities, and enhance worker safety on the job," said WCB CEO Phillip Germain.

Learn more about the strategy at [worksafesask.ca/fatalities-and-serious-injuries](https://worksafesask.ca/fatalities-and-serious-injuries).

"Our province leads the country in so many ways, but when it comes to workplace safety, we still have a ways to go before we are number one in workplace safety in Canada," said Germain. "We are committed to ensuring safer workplaces in our province. While safe workplaces are good for business, the most important part of every job is for each worker to come home safely."

Safety and Health Week serves as both a recognition of the progress Saskatchewan has made and a reminder of the work still needed. Continued collaboration between workers, employers, industry associations and government remains essential in creating safer workplaces for all. By strengthening prevention efforts, support safety leadership and prioritizing education and enforcement, Saskatchewan can continue to build on these historic gains.

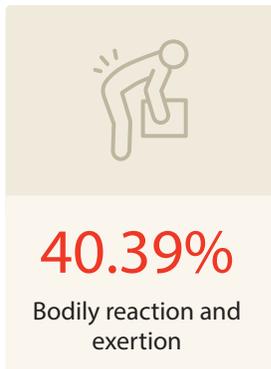
The target is clear: a province where every worker returns home from work safe. With shared commitment and sustained action, Saskatchewan can become the safest place to work in Canada.



GET THE FACTS ON FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES IN SASKATCHEWAN WORKPLACES

Saskatchewan continues to see approximately 2,400 serious injuries in workplaces every year.

Top three causes of serious injuries in 2023:



2023 is the most recent data available for serious injuries. Serious injuries are reported at a one-year lag period because it may take some time for claims to mature into serious injuries.

Saskatchewan's 2024 Total injury rate and Time Loss injury rate were the lowest in the province's recorded history. But there's more work to do.

Learn about the potential hazards in your workplace, be aware and share with others.

Read about the strategy and what you can do to prevent serious injuries and fatalities in the workplace.



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[worksafesask.ca](https://worksafesask.ca)