



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EXPERIMENT STATION

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

April 28th is Workers' Memorial Day. A time set aside to remember those who lost their lives on the job and draw attention to the importance of protecting workers from death and injury.

The most recent data shows 4,543 preventable workplace deaths in 2023. While the average number of deaths per 100,000 workers in the United States for all industries is 3, in the specific division of agriculture it is 20!

It is the responsibility of EVERYONE, no matter the title or position, to help maintain a safe and healthy workplace. Your efforts can make a difference by integrating safety into your daily job tasks.

- ✓ **Be a good example.** If others see you taking short cuts, they will too. This is especially important when working with new-hires, or if you oversee workers.
- ✓ **Be responsible.** Never ignore a hazard-correct it, tell next up the chain, and suggest solutions. Ask questions when unsure about a situation.
- ✓ **Support your co-workers;** your actions can make a difference. You can help provide guidance, team up with a co-worker to raise awareness of a change needed, or simply encourage each other to do the right thing.

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In remembrance and an effort to bring cold numbers into light that a soul was lost with each tick of that statistical counter, below are summaries of only a few of the OSHA fatality investigations that took place right here in Mississippi within the past two years.

**At 10:45 a.m. an employee 17yrs old was found unconscious after pressure washing the inside of a walk-in cooler with a gas operated pressure washer. The employee died due to suspected carbon monoxide poisoning.*

**At 10:15 a.m., an employee 32yo working as a roofer was applying underlayment near an electrical weatherhead. The employee made contact with an exposed energized electrical splice or splices. The employee was electrocuted and died as a result.*

**At 4:00 p.m. a 55yo employee was unloading catfish into the water tanks of a live-haul tanker truck, working on top. The net holding the catfish had a scale attached to it that weighed the load of fish. The employee needed to call the weight out to the truck driver before unlatching the net of fish. However, he could not see the numbers on the scale, so he started walking backwards to get a better view of the scale. The employee walked backward off the top of the tanker and fell 10 feet onto the gravel road. The employee died due to his injuries.*

**At 9:30 a.m. a 61yo employee was underneath a service truck, removing the rear caliper from the right rear axle, when the bottle jack slipped and the service truck fell on top of him. The employee suffered a neck fracture and died.*

Think about what situations may have led to each of these accidents, the people directly impacted, and most importantly, for us, what can be learned.

Sources:

<https://www.nsc.org/workplace/get-involved/workers-memorial-day>
<https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/work-overview>
<https://www.osha.gov/fatalities>