

What is the hazard?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, workplace suicides in the United States totaled 304 in 2018 — an increase of 11 percent from the previous year and the highest number since the bureau began tracking the data in 1992¹. From 2009 to 2018, 40 Kentucky workers died by suicide while in the workplace.

Did you know: *The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that each year approximately one million people die from suicide - one every 40 seconds².*

The “Do’s” and “Don’ts” of establishing suicide awareness in the workplace.

The Do’s—Practices that may prove helpful:

- Do emphasize help-seeking and provide information on finding help.
- Do emphasize preventative actions one with suicidal thoughts can take.
- Do list the warning signs, as well as risk and protective factors of suicide.
- Do highlight effective treatments for underlying mental health issues.

The Don’ts—Practices that may prove problematic:

- Don’t glorify or romanticize suicide, people who have died by suicide, or methods of suicide.
- Don’t normalize suicide by presenting it as a common event.
- Don’t present suicide as an inexplicable act or explain it as a result of stress only.
- Don’t focus on personal details of people who have died by suicide.

For more information on these “do’s” and “don’ts”, visit the Suicide Prevention Resource Center at www.sprc.org.



Recommendations for workers living with suicidal thoughts or behavior:

- Create a work environment that fosters communication and a sense of belonging and respect to reduce the stigma of discussing mental illness and mental well-being.
- Establish an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides confidential counseling and referrals for employees who may be experiencing personal hardships.
- Provide mental health awareness training to managers and supervisors as they spend the most time observing their employees, and are often in the best position to observe behavioral changes and risk factors.
- Identify employees who have experienced recent personal hardships and offer the company’s assistance when feasible.

Further Resources

Name of Resource	Resource Description	Resource Link
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
Suicide Prevention & Response: New Tools Help Employers Take Action	There are many organizations working to dispel myths and bring hope and light to the subject so that those in crisis feel comfortable seeking help to recover and re-engage fully in life.	http://workplacementalhealth.org/Mental-Health-Topics/Suicide-Prevention
Workplace Suicide Prevention and Postvention	The Action Alliance worked closely with its partners to develop a Comprehensive Blueprint for Workplace Suicide Prevention and A Manager's Guide to Suicide Postvention in the Workplace.	https://theactionalliance.org/communities/workplace
Preventing Suicide	This webpage provides resources for the prevention of suicide, particularly in the construction industry.	https://www.osha.gov/preventingsuicides/

Let us know what you think about this alert. [Click here](#) to complete our brief, anonymous survey.

For additional training materials and information regarding the KOSHS program, please visit the program website at: <http://www.mc.uky.edu/kiprc/koshs/index.html>

Sources

[1] <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>

[2] https://www.who.int/mental_health/en/

Contact KOSHS:

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