

Transforming Disparity to Duty: Communication Barriers in Workplace Safety

Building Your Communication Toolkit to Overcome Language Barriers

Presenters: Dr. Christine Robinson
and Dr. Susan Cathcart



**COLUMBIA
SOUTHERN**
UNIVERSITY



COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Learn more at ColumbiaSouthern.edu/OSH



Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degree programs:

- Emergency Services Management
- Business
- Environmental Management
- Fire Science
- Health
- Human Resources
- Occupational Safety and Health

Board Certified Safety Professional Prep Courses:

- Certified Safety Professional (CSP®)
- Associate Safety Professional (ASP®)
- Graduate Safety Practitioner (GSP®)

BCSP | Board of Certified[®]
Safety Professionals

How do communication barriers affect safety?





Understanding Communication Barriers

理解溝通障礙

Comprender las barreras de la comunicación

- Language differences
- Cultural misunderstandings



Communication Proficiencies and Higher Education

We have a duty and responsibility to communicate effectively.

Our degrees and safety certifications may not be enough.

Developing communications skills can improve our safety language.

Impact of Communication Barriers on Safety

Direct negative impacts for employers, employees, and their communities.

Increased Accident Risk

Impact of Communication Barriers on Safety

Decreased Employee Morale

Missed
Workdays

Lost Wages
& Revenue

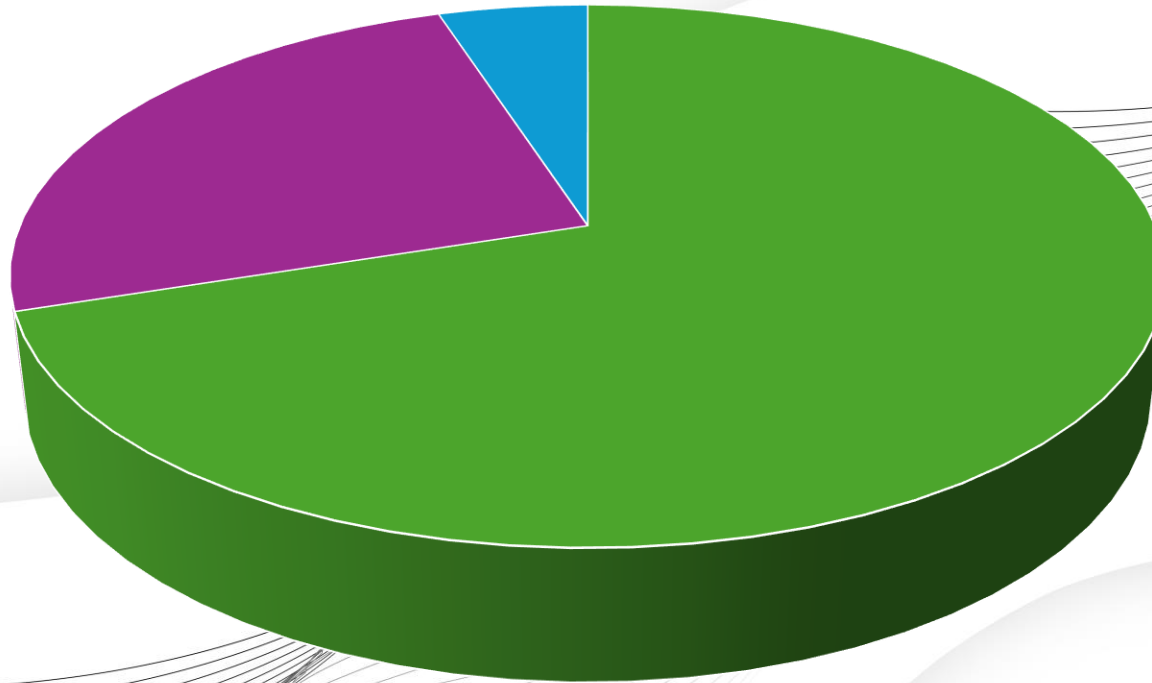
Lower
Productivity

Higher Workers Comp Rates

Percentage of Workplace Accidents Caused by Communication Failures and Language Barriers

Startling Statistics

Communication failures account for 70% of workplace accidents



Language barriers contribute to nearly 25% of all workplace accidents

- Communication Failures
- Language Barriers
- Other Causes

Language Barriers in the Workplace

68 million people in the US speak a language other than English at home

Nearly 30 million people have Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Foreign-born workers represent more than 18% of the US civilian workforce

Non-English speaking and LEP workers are employed in high IR industries

Accident and Death Disparities

Work-related fatalities continue to increase in foreign-born Hispanic or Latino workers

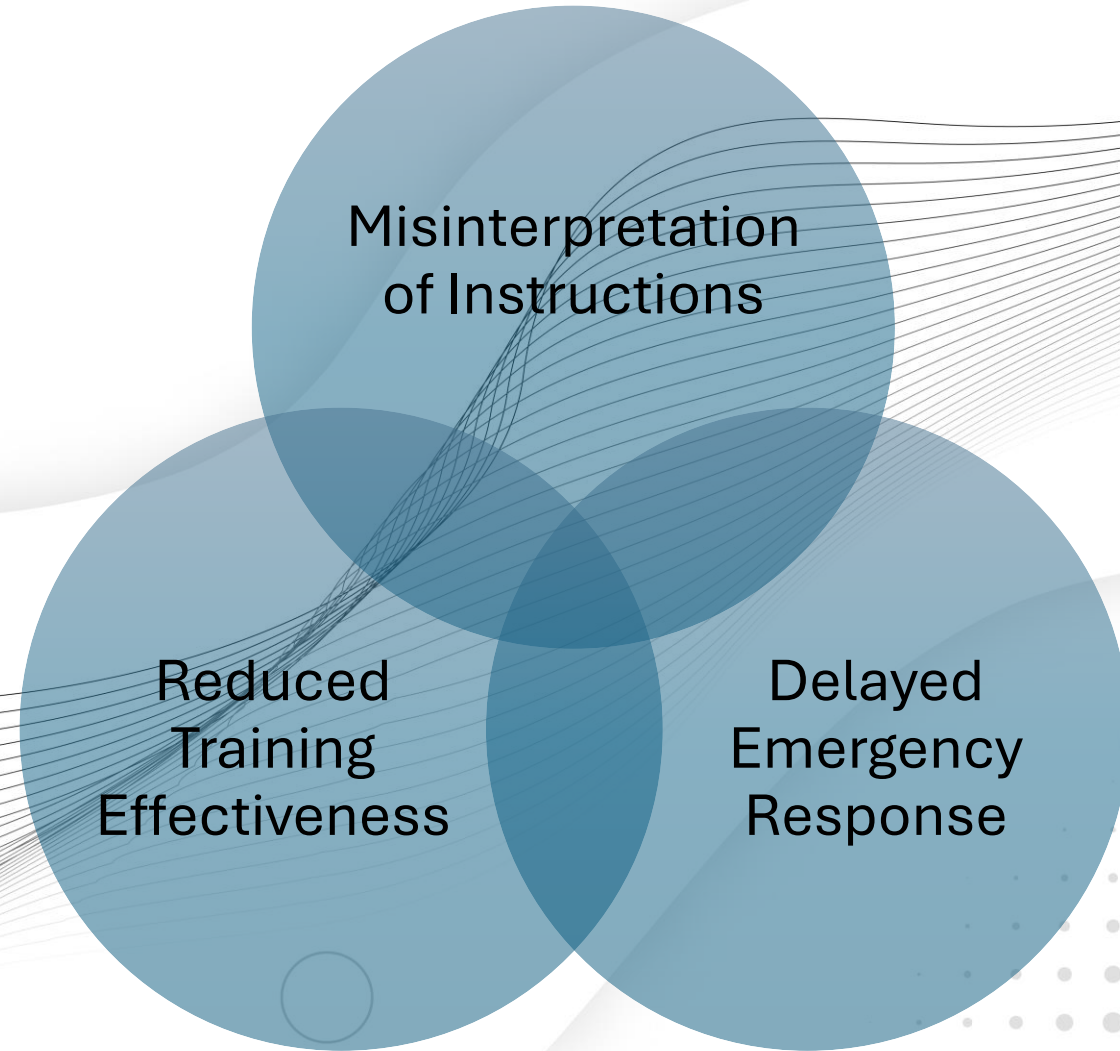


Accident and Death Disparities

Work-related fatalities continue to increase in foreign-born Hispanic or Latino workers



Effects of Language Barriers on Safety



Strategies to Overcome Language Barriers

OSHA Resources

Provide Safety Information in Multiple Languages

Visual Aids and Signage

Multilingual Training Programs

Bilingual Safety Personnel



How many languages does OSHA speak?



Job Safety and Health IT'S THE LAW!



Kaligtasan sa Trabaho at Kalusugan IYAN ANG BATAS!

All workers have the right to:

- A safe workplace.
- Raise a safety or health concern with your employer or OSHA, or report a work-related injury or illness, without being retaliated against.
- Receive information and training on job hazards, including all hazardous substances in your workplace.
- Request a confidential OSHA inspection of your workplace if you believe there are unsafe or unhealthy conditions. You have the right to have a representative contact OSHA on your behalf.
- Participate (or have your representative participate) in an OSHA inspection and speak in private to the inspector.
- File a complaint with OSHA within 30 days (by phone, online or by mail) if you have been retaliated against for using your rights.
- See any OSHA citations issued to your employer.
- Request copies of your medical records, tests that measure hazards in the workplace, and the workplace injury and illness log.

This poster is available free from OSHA.

Contact OSHA. We can help.

Employers must:

- Provide employees a workplace free from recognized hazards. It is illegal to retaliate against an employee for using any of their rights under the law, including raising a health and safety concern with you or with OSHA, or reporting a work-related injury or illness.
- Comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Notify OSHA within 8 hours of a workplace fatality or within 24 hours of any work-related inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye.
- Provide required training to all workers in a language and vocabulary they can understand.
- Prominently display this poster in the workplace.
- Post OSHA citations at or near the place of the alleged violations.

On-Site Consultation services are available to small and medium-sized employers, without citation or penalty, through OSHA-supported consultation programs in every state.



Lahat ng manggagawa ay may karapatang:

- Magtrabaho sa isang ligtas na lugar.
- Idulog sa tagapamahala ng inyong trabaho o sa OSHA ang anumang pagkabahala tungkol sa inyong kaligtasan o kalusugan, sakit o kapansanan na may kinalaman sa inyong gawain, nang walang pangambang kayo ay gantihan.
- Tumanggap ng impormasyon at nararapat na pagsasanay ukol sa mga panganib na kakaharapin sa inyong trabaho, at anumang mapanganib na bagay na nasa inyong lugar na pinagtrabahuhan.
- Humiling sa OSHA ng pagsusuri o inspeksyon sa inyong pagawaan kung sa tingin ninyo ay may mga kondisyon o bagay-bagay dito na hindi ligtas at nakakaapekto sa inyong kalusugan. Pananatilihin lihim ng OSHA ang inyong pangalan. May karapatan din kayong magpatulong sa isang kinatawan para makipag-ugnayan sa OSHA para sa inyo.
- Lumahok (o di kaya ay atasan ang inyong kinatawan na lumahok) sa pagsusuring gagawin ng OSHA, at kausapin nang sarilinan ang tagapagsuri.
- Magsampa ng reklamo sa OSHA sa loob ng 30 araw (sa pamamagitan ng telepono, online o sa koreo) kung kayo ay ginantihan dahil sa pagsusulong ninyo ng inyong karapatan.
- Malaman ang anumang kautusang ipinapatupad ng OSHA sa inyong amo o tagapamahala.
- Humiling ng kopya ng inyong pansariling talaan medikal, mga pagsusuring ginawa para tukuyin ang mga panganib sa inyong pagawaan, pati na rin ang talaan ng mga naging karamdaman at kapansanan nagmula sa inyong pagawaan.

Ang karatulang ito ay libre mula sa OSHA.

Kontakin ang OSHA.
Makakatulong kami.



1-800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 1-877-889-5627 • www.osha.gov

1-800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 1-877-889-5627 • www.osha.gov

Available Languages

**Job Safety and Health
IT'S THE LAW!**

All workers have the right to:

- A safe workplace
- Receive a copy of their workplace safety and health information from their employer or OSHA, as appropriate.

Employers must:

- Provide employees a workplace free from recognized hazards. It is illegal to retaliate against an employee for any part of their exercise of these rights.

English - 12.75" x 17.75"

English - 8.5" x 14"

**Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo
¡ES LA LEY!**

Todos los trabajadores tienen el derecho a:

- Un lugar de trabajo seguro.
- Recibir copia de sus materiales de seguridad o de la OSHA sobre procedimientos de seguridad o salud o recibir una lección o información en el trabajo.

Los empleadores deben:

- Proveer a los trabajadores un lugar de trabajo libre de peligros reconocidos. Es ilegal discriminar contra a empleados quien ha ejercido sus derechos bajo la ley, ni retaliar habiendo hecho.

Español (Spanish) - 12.75" x 17.75"

Español (Spanish) - 8.5" x 14"

**السلامة والصحة بالوظيفة
إنه القانون!**

جميع العمال لديهم الحق في:

- الحصول على مكان عمل آمن.
- الحصول على نسخة من مواد السلامة والصحة بالوظيفة أو من OSHA، كما هو مناسب.

يجب على أصحاب العمل:

- توفير بيئة العمل خالية من المخاطر المعروفة. من غير القانوني التمييز ضد الموظفين الذين يمارسون حقوقهم بموجب القانون، أو الانتقام من أي جزء من ممارسة هذه الحقوق.

العربية (Arabic) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**Kaluwagan ug Kahimsog sa
Panglawas sa Trabaho
KINI ANG BALAO!**

Ang lahat ng mga trabahador ay may karapatan sa:

- Isang ligtas na lugar ng pagtrabaho.
- Magkaroon ng isang kopya ng OSHA sa kaluwagan sa panglawas sa trabaho o magkaroon ng isang kopya ng mga materyal sa seguridad sa pagtrabaho, kung mayroon sila sa kanilang lugar ng pagtrabaho o kung magkaroon sa OSHA, kung angkop.

Ang mga empleyador ay:

- Dapat magkaroon ng mga trabahador na ligtas sa pagtrabaho.
- Dapat magkaroon ng mga trabahador na ligtas sa pagtrabaho.
- Dapat magkaroon ng mga trabahador na ligtas sa pagtrabaho.
- Dapat magkaroon ng mga trabahador na ligtas sa pagtrabaho.

Sinugbuanong Binisayâ (Cebuano) - 12.75" x 17.75"

Sinugbuanong Binisayâ (Cebuano) - 8.5" x 14"

**工作安全与健康
这是法律规定!**

所有工人有权:

- 获得安全的工作环境。
- 向其雇主索取安全与健康资料或向 OSHA 索取安全与健康方面的信息。

雇主必须:

- 为工人提供不存在已知职业危害的工作场所。严禁雇主因行使合法权利而歧视工人。

简体字 (Chinese) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**Sekirite ak Sante nan Travay
SE LALWA!**

Tout travayè yo gen dwa a:

- Non anbasan traway li yo an sekirite.
- Non anbasan traway li yo an sekirite.

Anbasan yo dwe:

- Bay travayè yo yon anbasan traway li yo an sekirite ak sa gen sante rekones. E ilegal pou yo anbasan pou bay sante yo yo diskrimine, tankou pou: retye travayè yo, yo ou diskrimine.

Kreyòl ayisyen (Haitian Creole) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**직업 안전 및 건강
법률로 규정된 의무입니다!**

모든 근로자는 다음에 같은 권리가 있습니다.

- 안전한 직장.
- 모든 유해 물질에 대해 적절한 교육과 보호.
- OSHA에 안전 관련 권리 사항을 문의하거나 법원에 소송을 제기할 수 있습니다.

고용주는 다음에 같은 책임이 있습니다.

- 유해 물질로부터 안전하고 건강한 작업 환경을 조성하는 것입니다. 근로자를 합법적인 권리를 행사하는 것을 이유로 차별하거나 해고하는 것은 불법입니다.

한국인 (Korean) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**Kejbarek im Ejmour
Ilo Jikin Jerbal
EJ KAKIEN!**

Anda berhak atas pekerjaan yang:

- Aman dan sehat.
- Aman dan sehat.

Anda harus:

- Menyediakan tempat kerja yang aman dan sehat.
- Menyediakan tempat kerja yang aman dan sehat.

Kajin Majel (Marshalllese) - 8.5" x 14"

**काममा सुरक्षा र स्वास्थ्य
या कानून हो!**

सबै कामदारहरूको अधिकार हुन्छ:

- सुरक्षित कार्यस्थल प्राप्त गर्न।
- आफ्नो कार्यस्थलको बारेमा जानकारी प्राप्त गर्न।
- आफ्नो कार्यस्थलको बारेमा जानकारी प्राप्त गर्न।

कार्यदाताहरूको जिम्मेवारी हुन्छ:

- सुरक्षित कार्यस्थल प्रदान गर्नु।
- सुरक्षित कार्यस्थल प्रदान गर्नु।
- सुरक्षित कार्यस्थल प्रदान गर्नु।

नेपाली (Nepali) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**Безпека праці та охорона здоров'я —
ЦЕ ЗАКОН!**

Кожі працівники мають право:

- На безпечне робоче місце.
- Отримувати копію матеріалів з безпеки або інформації, отримувати роз'яснення від працівників з безпеки праці та охорони здоров'я.

Роботодавці зобов'язані:

- Забезпечити працівників робочим місцем, вільним від відомих професійних небезпек.
- Надати копію матеріалів з безпеки праці та охорони здоров'я, отримувати роз'яснення від працівників з безпеки праці та охорони здоров'я.

Українська (Ukrainian) - 12.75" x 17.75"

Українська (Ukrainian) - 8.5" x 14"

**An Toàn và Sức Khỏe Trong Công Việc
ĐÓ LÀ LUẬT!**

Mọi công nhân đều có quyền:

- Một nơi làm việc an toàn.
- Nhận được bản sao của tài liệu OSHA, hoặc bản sao của tài liệu hướng dẫn về an toàn và sức khỏe trong công việc.

Chủ hãng có phải:

- Cung cấp một môi trường nơi làm việc không có những mối nguy hiểm được nhận ra. Tổ chức nhân viên được thực hiện các quyền của họ, bao gồm yêu cầu quyền.

Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**Bezpieczeństwo i higiena pracy
TAKIE JEST PRAWO!**

Wszyscy pracownicy mają prawo do:

- Bezpiecznego miejsca pracy.
- Odbioru kopii materiałów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa i higieny pracy, lub skopiowania informacji z OSHA, w zależności od sytuacji.

Pracodawcy zobowiązani są do:

- Zapewnienia pracownikom bezpiecznego i higienicznego środowiska pracy.
- Zapewnienia pracownikom bezpiecznego i higienicznego środowiska pracy.

Polski (Polish) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**Segurança e Saúde no Trabalho
É A LEI!**

Todos os trabalhadores têm direito a:

- Um local de trabalho seguro.
- Receber uma cópia dos materiais de segurança ou da OSHA, ou receber uma lição ou informação em português.

Os funcionários devem:

- Fornecer aos funcionários um ambiente de trabalho livre de riscos reconhecidos. É ilegal retaliar contra um funcionário por exercer seu direito de obter uma cópia dos materiais de segurança ou da OSHA, ou receber uma lição ou informação em português.

Português (Portuguese) - 12.75" x 17.75"

**Безопасность труда и охрана здоровья —
ЭТО ЗАКОН!**

Все работники имеют право:

- На безопасные рабочие места.
- Получить копию материалов по безопасности или информации от OSHA, в зависимости от ситуации.

Работодатели обязаны:

- Обеспечить работников безопасной и гигиеничной рабочей средой.
- Обеспечить работников безопасной и гигиеничной рабочей средой.

Русский (Russian) - 12.75" x 17.75"

Русский (Russian) - 8.5" x 14"

**Badbaada Shaqooyo Caafimaad
WAA SHARCIGA!**

Dhammaan shaqooyaha ayaa u leedahay:

- Goob shaqo aamin ah.
- Kooxda shaqooyaha badbaada iyo caafimaad oo ay ka qaadaan OSHA, ama kooxda shaqooyaha caafimaad.

Shaqo-bixiyaha waa ku qabsan:

- In ay shaqooyihii ayaga goob shaqo aamin ah ah.
- In ay shaqooyihii ayaga goob shaqo aamin ah ah.

Af Soomali (Somali) - 12.75" x 17.75"

Af Soomali (Somali) - 8.5" x 14"

**Usalama na Afya Kazini
HII NI SHERIA!**

Wafeydkaad waa maqasho baahiyi:

- Kooxda shaqooyaha aamin ah.
- Kooxda shaqooyaha badbaada iyo caafimaad oo ay ka qaadaan OSHA, ama kooxda shaqooyaha caafimaad.

Wafeydkaad maqasho:

- In ay shaqooyihii ayaga goob shaqo aamin ah ah.
- In ay shaqooyihii ayaga goob shaqo aamin ah ah.

Kiswahili (Swahili) - 12.75" x 17.75"

Kiswahili (Swahili) - 8.5" x 14"

**Kaligtasan sa Trabaho at Kalusugan
IVAN ANG BATASI!**

Lahat ng mga trabahador ay may karapatan sa:

- Isang ligtas na lugar ng pagtrabaho.
- Magkaroon ng isang kopya ng OSHA sa kaluwagan sa panglawas sa trabaho o magkaroon ng isang kopya ng mga materyal sa seguridad sa pagtrabaho, kung mayroon sila sa kanilang lugar ng pagtrabaho o kung magkaroon sa OSHA, kung angkop.

Ang mga empleyador ay:

- Dapat magkaroon ng mga trabahador na ligtas sa pagtrabaho.
- Dapat magkaroon ng mga trabahador na ligtas sa pagtrabaho.

Tagalog (Tagalog) - 12.75" x 17.75"

Tagalog (Tagalog) - 8.5" x 14"

Cultural and Other Differences

- Cultural Perceptions of Safety
- Generational Communication Styles
- Emotional Responses to Safety
- Hierarchical Communication Challenges
- Impact on Team Dynamics
- Variability in Expression



How can continuing education help you?



Is your CSP or CIH enough?



Can you interpret your own safety culture?



Do your management styles compliment safety goals?

Lost in Translation by Dr. Susan Cathcart

How do we know that
communication is effective?



communication

Role of Human Resources in Safety

- Establish Safety Policies and Procedures
 - Employee handbook
 - Safety programs
 - Disciplinary actions
- Drive Effective Communication



Develop effective strategies to communicate with employees

- Build trust
- Avoid industry slang, jargon, idioms, and literal phrases
- Respect what is meaningful and significant to others
- Check your communication style



Training employees

- Knowledge and skills to do a job safely
- Communicate awareness of workplace hazards
- Learn to identify, report, and control hazards



Importance of the transfer of learning

One and done is
not a good
training strategy

Practice,
feedback,
assess

Enhance
retention

Conclusions:

Think industry-specific, community-specific, and culture-specific

Be mindful of
communication
proficiencies

Build trust

Identify
communication
gaps

Train individuals

Foster Open
Communication

Follow up

Reward success



**COLUMBIA
SOUTHERN**
UNIVERSITY



REFERENCES

- American Public Health Association (APHA). (2018). Ensuring Language Justice in Occupational Safety and Health Training, Policy Number: 20175. Issued November 7, 2017.
- Johnson, S., & Ostendorf, J. (2010). Hispanic employees in the workplace: higher rate of fatalities. *AAOHN Journal : Official Journal of the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses*, 58(1), 11–16. [https://doi-org.libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/10.3928/08910162-20091216-01](https://doi.org.libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/10.3928/08910162-20091216-01)
- UnidosUS (Formerly National Council of La Raza). (2012). (rep.). *Monthly Latino Employment Report* (Vol. October 5, 2012).
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017, May 8). Foreign-born workers: Labor force characteristics — 2016.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023). Foreign-born workers were a record high 18.1 percent of the U.S. civilian labor force in 2022, Issued June 16, 2023.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA). (2010). OSHA Training Standards Policy Statement, Issued April 28, 2010.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA). (2023). Worker’s Rights - OSHA 3021-02R 2023.

Illustrations/Photos/Graphics

Illustrations/Photos/Graphics:

Slide Nos. 2-28. Abstract Wave Background Photo. Vecteezy. (July, 2022). <https://www.vecteezy.com/photo/11607165-minimalist-and-modern-future-abstract-wavy-geometric-white-and-gray-color-background>

Slide No. 3 BCSP logo. <https://www.bcsp.org/>

Slide No. 4. Three OSH photos (7064859, 10381791, 12083124). <https://vecteezy.com>

Slide No. 5. Road Closure Sign in Polish. Adobe Stock. <https://stock.adobe.com/238960608>

Slide No. 6. Construction Worker Group Photo. Vecteezy. (May, 2023). <https://www.vecteezy.com/photo/47298213-group-of-construction-workers-wearing-safety-gear-and-helmets>

Slide No. 12. Field Workers Photo. Adobe Stock. (January, 2020). <https://stock.adobe.com/903657724>

Slide No. 13. Construction Workers. Adobe Stock. <https://stock.adobe.com/787398463>

Slide No. 15. OSHA Website Photo. Adobe Stock. (May, 2022). <https://stock.adobe.com/541060688>

Slide No. 16. Job Safety and Health Poster. OSHA. <https://www.osha.gov/publications/poster>

Slide No. 17. Available Languages. OSHA. <https://www.osha.gov/publications/poster>

Slide No. 18. Ethnic Hands Photo. Vecteezy. (March, 2024) <https://www.vecteezy.com/photo/45597715-hands-of-various-races-and-ethnicities-come-together-against-discrimination>

Slide No. 20. Communication Building Blocks. Vecteezy. (n.d.). <https://www.vecteezy.com/photo/5985804-communication-word-on-yellow-brick-wall>

Slide No. 21. Human Resources Graphic. Adobe Stock. (May, 2014). <https://stock.adobe.com/70499779>

Slide No. 22. Translate. Vecteezy. (n.d.). <https://www.vecteezy.com/photo/6057094-translate-word-on-white-keyboard>

Slide No. 22. Warning Board Photo. Vecteezy. (n.d.). <https://www.vecteezy.com/photo/48100502-a-board-with-warning-signs-about-danger-that-stands-before-the-start-of-construction-on-the-field>

Slide No. 23. Training Photo. Adobe Stock. (n.d.). <https://stock.adobe.com/753232290>

Slide No. 26. Q&A Graphic. Adobe Stock. (June, 2016). <https://stock.adobe.com/214409262>