



Safety News

Dedicated to ensuring the safest and healthiest working environment for our members

Spring 2024 | Issue 29

UA General Officers

Mark McManus
General President
Derrick Kualapai
General Secretary-Treasurer
Michael A. Pleasant
Assistant General President

General Executive

Board Members

Peter E. Gibbons, *District 1*
Kenneth J. Broadbent, *District 2*
Daniel C. Hendrix, *District 3*
Steven S. Breitlow, *District 4*
Gary Arnold, *District 5*
James H. Noon, *District 6*

Executive Officers

James E. Tucker
Executive Vice President
Terence N. Snooks
Director of Canadian Affairs
Anthony Gallagher
Administrative Assistant to the General President
Christopher A. Haslinger
Administrative Assistant to the General President
Terry Webb
Administrative Assistant to the General President/Canada

United Association

Directors

Thomas G. Bigley
Plumbing Services
Raymond W. Boyd
Education and Training
Russ Breckenridge
Political and Legislative Affairs
Patrick M. Dolan, Jr.
Metal Trades
Brian E. Fisher
Organizing and Recruitment
Chad Gilbert
Pipeline and Gas Distribution
Wendell P. Hibdon
Energy and Infrastructure
Brian P. Kelly
HVACR Service
Jason N. Pope, Sr.
Information Technology
William L. Welsh
Trade Jurisdiction

Our Vision

The United Association and its local unions will apply its best practices and resources to build the most educated and safest workforce in all sectors of the piping industry.

Message from Jennifer Massey Health, Safety, and Environmental Administrator



Just like nature waking from its winter slumber, we are shaking off the frost, embracing spring's warmth, and sprinting into action with renewed vigor and determination. It's

a time of growth, promise, and setting our sights on achieving greatness in safety.

In this edition, we're not just talking about safety, we're revving up for an amazing year ahead by igniting a fire within every one of us to strive for excellence. From the smallest safety precautions and boldest innovations to learning how to have tough conversations, every step we take is a leap forward toward a safer, healthier, happier, and more productive workplace.

Let's harness the energy of spring and propel ourselves towards our safety goals. When we embrace the challenges ahead with open arms, we know that with each hurdle we overcome, we're one step closer to a brighter, safer future.

In this issue

Introducing the Pipe PALS Community.. p2
Champions for Mental Health p2
Training p3
Ending the Epidemic of Loneliness at Work p10
White House Opioid Announcement .. p10
Safety at Work p11

Join us as we tackle the year ahead with gusto and determination. This is our time to shine, make a difference, and leave a legacy of safety that will endure for years to come. Let's make this year one for the books through progress, growth, and unparalleled safety excellence! ■

A Message from General President Mark McManus



May is mental health awareness month and a fitting time to share some staggering statistics with you. In 2021, there were 48,183 people who died by suicide in the United States—equal to one death every 11 minutes. The suicide rate for construction

workers is the second highest of all industries. We must all acknowledge that we have a problem and share conversations about mental health. As we bring this topic into the light, we open the door for people who are struggling to get help.

It is my honor to showcase the UA's commitment to mental health by sharing best practices from across the UA in an ongoing series of articles from our newly formed UA Pipe PALS (Peer Allies for Life Success) Advisory Committee.



Introducing the Pipe PALS Community

The United Association has formed a Pipe PALS (Peer Allies for Life Success) program to support the organization's mental health and suicide prevention

initiative. The UA Pipe PALS mission is to build a network of peer allies and equip them with tools and resources to accomplish two primary goals: aid in saving the lives of those who are at risk of suicide and improve the lives of those struggling with mental health or addiction issues.

UA Pipe PALS is a key component of our organization's mental health and suicide prevention initiative, which cultivates purpose, vision, resources, and values to inspire our membership and beyond.

The Pipe PALS Advisory Committee has been hard at work shaping the program, developing resources for all participating peer allies, and identifying best practices to share with locals throughout the U.S. and Canada. A new feature is the private Facebook group, created for participants of the 2171 and 2172 Mental Literacy courses. Through the Facebook group, course participants can collaborate, learn, and share resources with one another. The goal is to build a community that strengthens our Pipe PALS program and positively impacts our entire UA membership.

If you are a UA member who has completed the 2171 course or more and you're interested in the Facebook group, you can find it [here](#). A group administrator will respond to your request. If you have further questions, or any difficulties accessing the page, please contact Jennifer Massey at jmassey@uanet.org. ■

Champions for Mental Health

by Jennifer Massey, UA Safety and Health Administrator and UA Pipe PALS Committee Member

I am so thrilled to announce the formation of our new Pipe PALS Advisory Committee! As champions of safety, well-being, and progress, we recognize the importance of prioritizing mental health in the workplace.

The Advisory Committee proudly serves our brothers and sisters. We are dedicated to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment where every member feels valued, heard, and empowered. Led by a team of passionate individuals, this committee is spearheading initiatives to promote mental wellness, offer support services, and break down the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

In today's fast-paced world, taking care of our mental health is more crucial than ever. By establishing this committee, we're taking a proactive step toward ensuring the holistic well-being of our union members. Together, we will create a culture of compassion, understanding, and resilience—one where seeking help is not only encouraged but celebrated.

We invite all members to join us in this important endeavor. Together, we can build a stronger, healthier, and more resilient community. Let's support one another, lift one another up, and pave the way toward a brighter future for us all. Together, we are unstoppable!

Send Us Your Stories

We also ask that you please send your stories to the committee at pipepals@uanet.org. Tell us about the mental health champions in your area: what you, your local, your contractor, or your individual brothers or sisters are doing to promote mental health. By sharing these stories, you will encourage others to do the same—and it could even save a life. ■



Pipe PALS Advisory Committee, clockwise from front left: Jason Hebbert, Local 725 Training Director; Anthony Gallagher, Administrative Assistant to the General President (guest); Matt Taylor, Local 392 Training Director; Mike Hazard, Training Specialist; Mark McManus, General President; Jennifer Massey, Safety and Health Administrator; Ben Bradshaw, Local 100 Business Manager; and PJ Moss, Local 32 Training Director. Not pictured or attending virtually: Omar Galindo, Local 78 Organizer.

TRAINING



2024 OSHA Outreach Training

OSHA 510 Course 2150

OSHA Standards for the Construction Industry

May 6-9, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
July 15-18, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
October 7-10, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
December 2-5, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI

OSHA 500 Course 2151

Trainer Course for the Construction Industry

June 10-14, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
October 21-25, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
December 9-13, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI

OSHA 502 Course 2152

Update for Construction Industry Outreach Trainers

July 15-18, 2024.....	10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
	Online (Zoom)
September 9-12, 2024.....	10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
	Online (Zoom)
December 16-19, 2024.....	10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
	Online (Zoom)

Course 2154

Safe Bolting Principles and Practices

May 6-7, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
October 21-22, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
December 9-10, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI

Course 2170

Opioids in the Workplace

June 11-13, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
October 22-24, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Ann Arbor, MI
December 10-12, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Online (Zoom)

Course 2171

Introduction to Peer Support Skills and Mental Health Literacy

June 18-20, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	Long Island City, NY
October 8-10, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	El Monte, CA

Course 2172

Advanced Skills in Suicide Prevention Training, Peer Support Skills, and Mental Health Literacy

October 22-24, 2024.....	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
	El Monte, CA

Meet our Safety and Health Instructors

Although we are all safety professionals on the jobsites, in the classroom safety and health instructors take the lead with education. Their dedication, expertise, and commitment to excellence make them indispensable assets in the construction industry's ongoing quest for safer workplaces.

- Construction safety and health instructors ensure that workers and employers are aware of and compliant with relevant safety regulations and standards set by authorities, such as OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration).
- Instructors serve as leaders and mentors within the construction community, guiding workers toward safer practices and inspiring them to take ownership of their safety.
- Their leadership helps foster a positive safety culture that extends beyond the classroom and into daily work routines.

Over the past two years, it has been my pleasure to get to know these individuals and witness their unwavering dedication to the United Association. Their passion for ensuring that we maintain our position as industry leaders with the safest and most productive workplaces has been truly inspiring. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of them for their ongoing commitment and tireless efforts.

Tom Baptie, Local 597

- ITF instructor for six months
- Teaches safety courses 7110 and 2154
- Favorite safety topic: bolting
- Fun fact: Tom is an aviation enthusiast.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "I want to ensure that my coworkers and I leave in the same way that we arrived."



Michael Baptista, Local 342

- ITF instructor for 10 years
- Teaches safety courses OSHA 500, 502, 510, and Safety Culture for Front Leaders
- Favorite safety topic: falls
- Fun fact: Loves coaching and umpiring softball in his community.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "Doing what I love and loving what I do."



Jeffrey Berger, Local 322

- ITF instructor for six years
- Teaches safety courses OSHA 500, 502, 510, and *Trench and Excavation Competent Person Class*
- Favorite safety topic: excavations and fall protection
- Fun fact: Jeffrey has played approximately 200 rounds of golf since he retired in November 2022.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "As we become more experienced, sometimes we also become complacent. Instead of getting the correct tool, ladder, or proper PPE, we might take a chance. It only takes a split second for an accident to happen, and it could be fatal."

**Willie Heiss, Local 168**

- ITF instructor for seven years
- Teaches safety course 2160 *Safe Pressure Testing*
- Favorite safety topic: hydro testing safety
- Fun fact: Willie loves spending time at home with his pets.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "I want people to go home in the same condition that they came to work."

**Tom Carrigan, Local 7**

- ITF instructor for four years
- Teaches safety courses OSHA 500, 502, 510
- Favorite safety topic: rigging
- Fun fact: Tom's first car was a black '69 Plymouth Roadrunner that he wishes he still had today.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "When I started in the trade, we didn't have a safety culture. On my first job, I was required to wear fall protection but didn't receive any training. I value a safe jobsite and am glad to see how UA safety has progressed."

**Aaron Kiesling, Local 8**

- ITF instructor for 10 months
- Teaches safety courses OSHA 500, 502, 510
- Favorite safety topic: falls and fall protection
- Fun facts: After June 2, Aaron and his family will have been to all 30 Major League Baseball stadiums. When he was a Marine, Aaron had the honor of eating dinner with President Bill Clinton.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "I feel responsible to ensure everyone in my work environment is protected from harm every day. I enjoy educating apprentices and journeymen on the job and in the classroom about keeping themselves and others safe."

**Shaun Coomey, Local 157**

- ITF instructor for four years
- Teaches safety course 2170, *Opioids in the Workplace*
- Favorite safety topic: Safety Leadership Training and OSHA
- Fun fact: Shaun and his wife got married his senior year of high school, and they are still together 28 years later.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "I am committed to sending our brothers and sisters home every night, safe and healthy, both physically and mentally!"

**William Marable, Local 372**

- ITF instructor for seven years
- Teaches safety courses 2150, 2151, 2152
- Favorite safety topic: health hazards
- Fun fact: William loves traveling to new places.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "I want workers to go home healthy from work every day."

**Rita Neiderheiser, Local 669**

- ITF instructor for 17 years
- Teaches safety courses OSHA 500, 502, and 510, and assists with the NFPA 70E class during ITP.
- Favorite safety topic: confined spaces
- Fun fact: Rita loves dogs—she has three of her own and fosters/volunteers for animal shelters when she can.
- Why she prioritizes safety at work: "I believe that every worker should be protected from preventable injuries"



and illnesses on the job. Injuries that result from lack of safety measures or training can change lives on and off the job forever. We should have comprehensive training, proper fitting PPE, implemented controls, and full enforcement as ways to mitigate as many hazards as possible and help ensure safety."

Sam Phipps, Local 562

- ITF instructor for six months
- Teaches safety course that is currently being developed: *Active Violence Emergency Response Training (AVERT)*
- Favorite safety topic: workplace violence prevention and action
- Fun fact: Sam is an outdoor enthusiast with a passion for turkey hunting and backcountry hunting adventures.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "When it comes to the unfortunate topic of workplace violence, every second counts. Preparation and training to prevent or act in these situations can save lives."



Tresa M. Reece, Local 50

- ITF instructor for two years
- Teaches safety course OSHA 30 plus assists regionally for OSHA 502 update class
- Favorite safety topic: falls
- Fun fact: Tresa loves spoiling her three grandsons, gardening, traveling, motorcycling, hiking in the mountains, and boating on ocean water.
- Why she prioritizes safety at work: "Safety is a fundamental, responsible business practice. It's crucial for protecting people from harm, ensuring a healthy work environment, and enhancing overall productivity and well-being. Education is the key to empowering our membership and helping them grow."



Dale Walker, Local 495

- ITF instructor for eight years
- Teaches safety courses OSHA 500, 502, 510
- Favorite safety topic: helping other instructors improve their skills and enliven their OSHA classes
- Fun fact: Dale's youngest of three children graduates this year.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "It's important to me that I and my coworkers stay safe at work so we go home every day to see our families."



Jim Young, Local 495

- ITF instructor for 20 years
- Teaches safety courses OSHA 500, 502, 510
- Favorite safety topic: hazardous chemicals and confined space
- Fun fact: Jim and his wife love to ride electric recumbent trikes on rail trails.
- Why he prioritizes safety at work: "I had two friends—a fitter/welder team—who passed away from cancer within three months of each other. Most likely, they died of hexavalent chromium exposure at work." ■



SAVE the DATE

2025 MCAA Safety and Health Conference

January 15-16, 2025
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

[Conference web page](#)

One of the longest-running construction safety conferences, this event offers more than 50 hours of safety training and education, plus excellent speakers and networking. The UA encourages your participation and offers grants for members to attend (more details once registration opens).

The January 2024 conference in Tucson was a landslide win for Safety and Health. Read a recap [here](#).



UA LOCAL 100

3010 Interstate 30
Mesquite, TX 75150
214-341-8606

Ben Bradshaw
Business Manager

Justin Levvis
Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Grady Toler
Business Agent

Lance Pope
Business Agent

Beth Ann Smith
Office Manager

To My Fellow Business Managers,

I write to you today to make you aware of what is going on in a certain local union in our organization. Right now, as you read these words, there is someone in that local that has reached the end of their rope and is now considering and maybe even planning their own suicide. Others in this local are suffering in silence under the crushing weight of depression. The type of depression that makes it hard to even get out of bed and function. Others are so stressed out by their anxiety that they are quiet and distant at the dinner table. Maybe even a bit snappy. All they can think about are their worries. Some members, for one reason or another, tried hard drugs for the first time at some point. Then they tried them again....and again, and again, and again. Several sought comfort in a bottle and now they can't put that bottle down. Now they are all wondering how they let themselves get to this point. They aren't being the mother, father, spouse, or friend they always wanted to be. They aren't being the person that their families deserve them to be. The kind of person that they themselves deserve to be. Some are all alone. They don't have anyone to turn to when their mind starts working against them and their storms start raging. No one to reassure them. No one to help calm the storm.

This local I am describing is yours. It's also mine. No local is immune. Many of you already know this is true. Some of you know it's true from personal experience. Maybe you know firsthand because you have struggled with some of these issues personally. I do because I have.

The good news is you can do something about it. You have the power to. You have the resources to. You have the obligation to.

The UA Pipe PALS committee is searching all over to find and compile a best practices guideline that will be sent to all locals. Until then there is something you can do right now. Please see the attached "Quick Start Guide" that contains simple instructions to launch an effective peer ally program in your local. We will have more guidance and suggestions coming your way but please don't wait for that to get started. After all, someone's life is at stake.

As business managers, we wear many hats and have many obligations. There is no greater obligation than to the wellbeing and quality of life of our members. By taking just a few steps you can have a direct and lasting impact on the quality of your members' lives, their families' lives, and as a result your community as a whole. Please join me in this very important mission brothers. Help me save and improve our members' lives.

Fraternally,

Ben Bradshaw
Business Manager
Local 100

VitalCog Training Helps Build Zero-Suicide Culture



Suicide is personal, but it is also a public health issue that affects work, communities, and families. The construction industry experiences one of the highest rates of suicide, so we all need to play a role in providing support. An effective way to start is to improve workers' understanding of mental health and suicide prevention so they can recognize and connect with individuals at risk for and displaying suicide warning signs. In this way, UA members can be partners in the effort to prevent suicides.

UA encourages members who have completed Mental Literacy courses 2171 and 2172 to take the *VitalCog in Construction* course. This two-hour micro-course trains workers at all levels in the industry to appreciate how critical suicide prevention is, fosters open conversations, and promotes resources in construction. Our vision is to cultivate a community of workers who aspire to eliminate the devastating impact of suicide.

Strategy and Approach

- Build a network of individuals to provide guidance on suicide prevention and intervention.
- Provide evidence-based and relevant training to raise awareness and increase capacity, confidence, and competence in suicide prevention; skill building for mental health support and resiliency.
- Promote a culture that aspires to a "zero-suicide" mindset through safe and effective communication and engagement.

Goals

- Reduce stigma and raise awareness around mental health and suicide prevention.
- Promote open dialogue around mental health wellness.
- Encourage help-seeking and help-giving behaviors.

Why Construction?

Discuss prevalence and reasons why it is important to have conversations within the construction industry.

Bid: Identify Risk and Signs

Discuss risk factors and warning signs as they pertain to the construction industry through the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide.

Build: Conversations around Suicide

Discuss the value (and necessity) of having direct conversations about suicide.

Capitalizing on Opportunities

At the March Bootcamp, Jennifer Massey and Michael Hazard delivered a presentation on VitalCog training to the instructors. Omar Galindo, Local 78 Organizer, and Joe Hock, Local 100 Organizer, who are both UA instructors for the Mental Literacy courses 2171 and 2172, assisted with role-playing activities during the presentation.



Boot camp participants

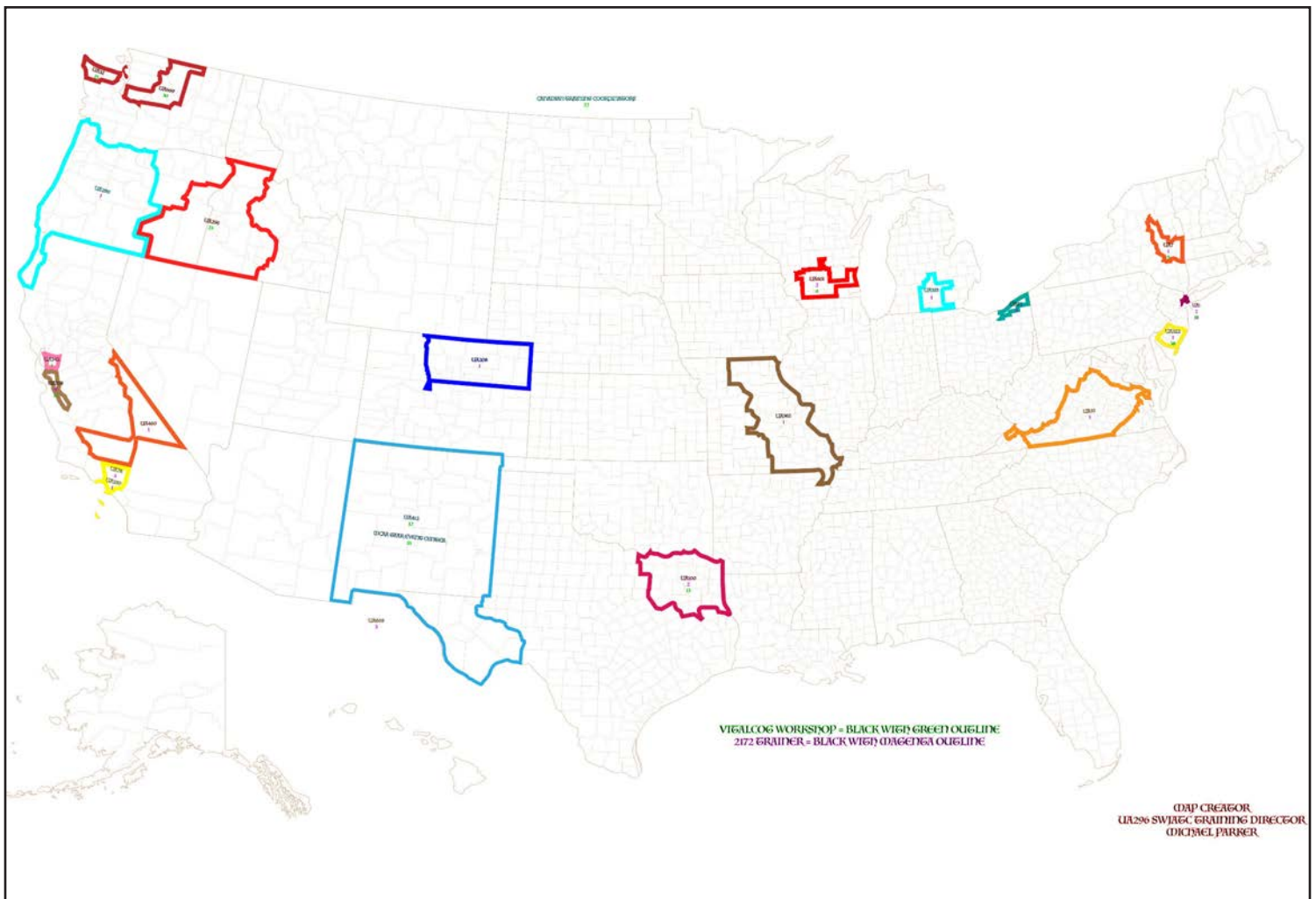


VitalCog Instructors Asked to Help Track Participation in VitalCog

Although the VitalCog courses are not pre-registered through the registrar's office, the UA aims to monitor the number of members receiving the two-hour VitalCog training

in both the U.S. and Canada. To facilitate this, we've established a Workshop 70 course to track member completion of the training. We kindly ask all graduates of the 2172 course who teach the VitalCog course to submit a completed roster to Tyler Masengale at tmasengale@uanet.org. Tyler will also provide the blank roster upon request.

To oversee our progress, Michael Parker, Local 296 Training Coordinator, has created and now oversees an interactive map. This map pinpoints the geographical locations of our 2172 graduates and offers insights into completed VitalCog micro-training courses. We express our sincere appreciation to Brother Parker for his commitment, and to Mark Hosick, Local 296 Business Manager, for his unwavering support. As of April 1, 2023, there are 39 UA instructors qualified to teach VitalCog Courses and 202 members who have attended a Workshop 70 session. Let's ensure your local is represented on this map! ■





CONSTRUCTION WORKING MINDS

Mental Health Promotion, Suicide Prevention and Addiction Recovery at Work
www.ConstructionWorkingMinds.org

2025 Construction Working Minds Summit

Save the Date

February 24-27, 2025
Dallas, Texas

One of the highlights at the recent 2024 Summit in Kansas City was that Bryan Murphy, Local 393 Director of Training, won the first-place award for the Mental Health Tool Talk Completion. Congratulations! To learn more about topics and insights from the Summit, read this [White Paper](#).



UA members at the Construction Working Minds Summit Gala



UA's Jennifer Massey and Raffi Elchemmas from MCAA



Justin Azbill, Milwaukee Tool, Safety Director, National Environment, Health, & Safety and Jennifer Massey, UA Health, Safety, and Environmental Administrator

Ending the Epidemic of Loneliness at Work

Even though most workers have returned to work post-pandemic, whether full-time or hybrid, a lack of feeling connected remains. It's an "epidemic of loneliness and isolation," according to the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. His [advisory document](#) reports that only 39% of U.S. adults feel very connected to others, and 62% say they have feelings of loneliness. Murthy said when he talked to people all around the U.S., many told him they felt isolated, invisible, and insignificant.

Loneliness is a detriment to the health of individuals, society, and businesses, and its impact should not be ignored. It is more than a bad feeling. Loneliness increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety, and premature death.

In its [Tackling the Loneliness Epidemic at Work resource](#), the Health Action Alliance (HAA) reports that loneliness costs employers more than \$154 billion a year in lost productivity due to absenteeism. This lack of connection hurts the bottom line in other ways, too, elevating stress, reducing team participation, and increasing intent to quit.

Murthy said, "We have an opportunity and an obligation to make the same investments in addressing social connection that we have made in addressing tobacco use, obesity, and the addiction crisis. If we don't, the price will be our individual and collective health and well-being. We will further retreat into our corners—angry, sick, and alone," Murthy said.

Action can change the course. The [Surgeon General's advisory document](#) is a thorough resource, establishing the current realities and risks and providing six key recommendations for advancing social connection at work. Page 61 of the document summarizes "What Workplaces Can Do."

1. Make social connection a strategic priority.
2. Train and empower leaders and managers.
3. Leverage existing leadership and employee training, orientation, and wellness resources.
4. Create practices and a workplace culture that invites connection.
5. Establish policies that protect workers' relationships outside work.
6. Consider the opportunities and challenges of flexible work hours and arrangements.

The [HAA document](#) is a concise presentation of these recommendations, with industry and organization leadership insights, plus a resource page.

"It's really thinking about mental health, not outside of the workplace, but thinking about the physical and mental health of their workers being important to the health of the company or the organization as a whole," said Rafael Campos, U.S. Surgeon General's Office spokesperson. ■

White House Opioid Announcement features MCAA and Alliance Partners



The Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCAA) and its safety alliance partners were highlighted in a [March announcement](#) from the White House. The statement introduced a new program targeting opioid overdoses entitled, *The White House Challenge to Save Lives from Overdose*.

In coordination with White House staff, the MCAA has been working with the National Electric Contractors Association (NECA), the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA), and The Association of Union Contractors (TAUC) to tackle the construction industry's opioid overdose epidemic. The focus has been industry access to naloxone, a drug designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose.

The four participating organizations have collaborated with union partners to train thousands of workers on substance abuse, overdose prevention, and the use of naloxone.

"MCAA is honored to be a part of the historic initiative," said Raffi Elchemmas, MCAA's Executive Director of Safety, Health and Risk Management. "Together with our safety alliance partners, MCAA strongly endorses ... engagement in solutions to the opioid epidemic, such as having naloxone on construction sites and ... available to the workforce." ■

SAFETY AT WORK



Locals Encouraged to Join UA Participation in May Fall Prevention Campaign

The United Association will be a premier partner for the **National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction & Safety Stand-Down** during the week of May 6-10. This is the first time we've participated, and we are enthusiastic about this opportunity to showcase our organization's commitment and contributions to creating a safer and more resilient construction industry. Please join in. By actively supporting efforts to prevent falls and promote safety, we all help protect lives, reduce injuries, and create safer work environments for construction workers nationwide.

Learn more about preparing for a successful Stand-Down [here](#). Please share any stories about how your local or industry partners have supported the Stand-Down with Jennifer Massey at jmassey@uanet.org. ■

OSHA's New Workplace Mental Health Fact Sheet is a Useful Reference

The U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) has created a two-page [Workplace Mental Health fact sheet](#) that summarizes key mental health topics related to the workplace and lists links to a range of related resources. It's available free on their website. ■

Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments for 2024

Annual adjustments to OSHA's civil penalty amounts went into effect on January 15, 2024. The rates are listed in the [final rule](#) issued by the Department of Labor. Based on a 2015 law, these adjustments for inflation are made in January each year. Find the 2024 rates [here](#). ■

CPWR Analyzes Pre-Task Planning among Contractors

In its November 2023 Data Bulletin, the Center for Construction Research and Training, or CPWR, analyzed construction contractor-reported safety practices, specifically pre-task planning (PTP), personal protective equipment (PPE) provision, and heat exposure reduction. We are highlighting their insights on pre-task planning in this article, but you can read the full CPWR issue [here](#).

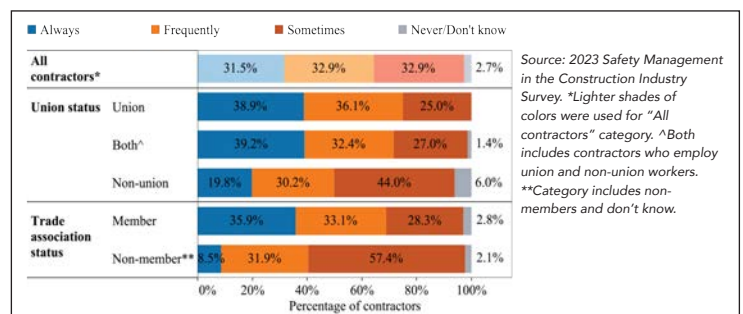
The hazards for construction workers include falls, injuries from machinery or electrical contact, and environmental factors like heat, plus exposure to chemicals. There are steps employers can take to prevent or reduce these risks—and therefore improve the health and safety of construction workers—such as offering training, improving workplace and task design, providing PPE, and conducting PTP.

The CPWR utilized data from the 2023 Safety Management in the Construction Industry survey, a collaboration with Dodge Construction Network, to examine reported safety practices among construction contractors. Respondents included 145 specialty contractors and 153 general contractors. The survey also considered union and trade association membership status of the responding firms.

- A majority of the firms employed all or some union workers.
- A majority of the firms were members of trade associations.
- Contractors that hired union members were significantly more likely to be trade association members.

Chart A shows the correlation between the contractors' union and trade association status and how regularly they perform PTP. Typically, pre-task planning is a process where supervisors and workers examine the task, its potential hazards, and how to control them before work begins. Union hiring and trade association membership increases the reported occurrence of PTP.

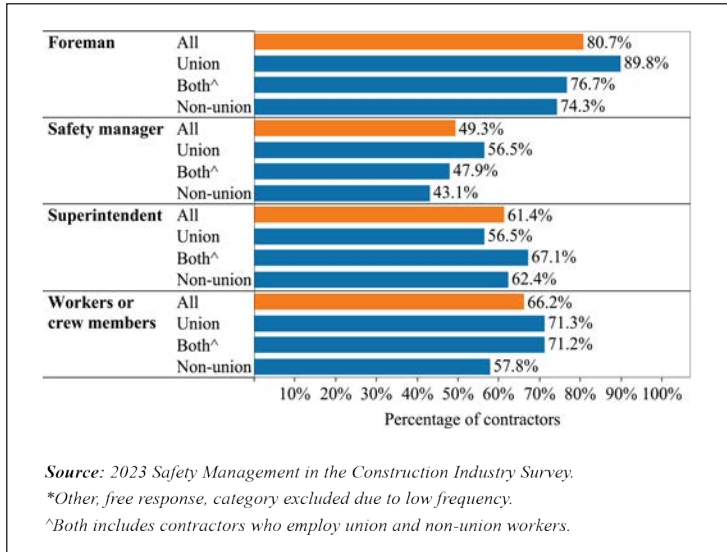
Chart A: Reported pre-task planning by union and trade association status



As published in *Data Bulletin*, November 2023, CPWR.

The report also analyzed which employees were most likely to be involved in PTP and their union status. Foremen who were union members came out on top.

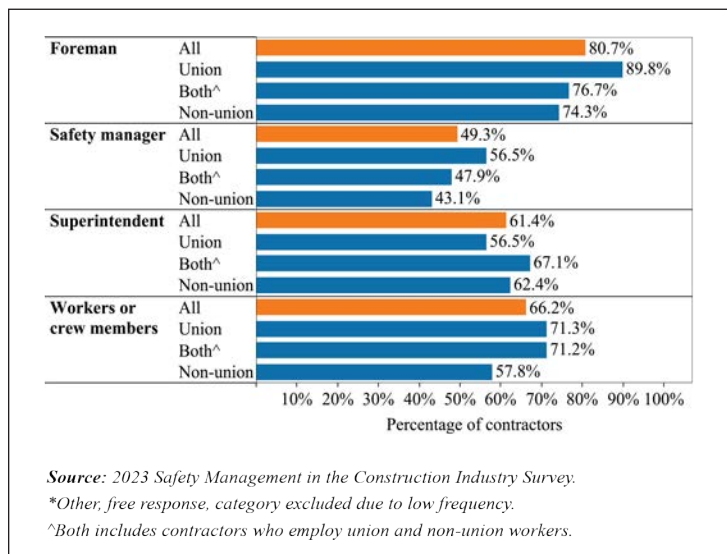
Chart B: Type of employee* involved in pre-task planning by union status



As published in *Data Bulletin*, November 2023, CPWR.

Also interesting to note is the breakdown of the routinely used safety practices on jobsites. PTP made it into the top five.

Chart C: Top 5 safety practices used routinely on jobsites by union status



As published in *Data Bulletin*, November 2023, CPWR.

Key Takeaways from the BLS Workplace Injuries and Illnesses Report

by MK Fletcher, Safety and Health Specialist, AFL-CIO

On November 8, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its annual nonfatal injury and illness data. For the first time, the BLS has published all-industry estimates for injuries resulting in days away from work (DAFW) and days with job transfer or restriction (DJTR) as a biennial or every two years calculation. They will report this and demographic data biennially going forward. Also, please note that nonfatal injury data is significantly undercounted: we estimate that the true toll of injuries is two to three times higher than reported by BLS.

Below are highlights from our initial analysis of the BLS report. Read more details in the [news release](#).

Overall Injury and Illness Data (2022)

- The 2.8 million reported injuries/illnesses represent a 7.5% increase from 2021.
- Both injuries and illnesses increased from 2021.
 - Respiratory illnesses drove that category; while the 365,000 reported illness number for 2022 is up 35% from 2021 (269,600), it is 15% lower than in 2020 (428,700).
 - The number of injuries (2,343,600) increased 4.5% from 2021 (2,242,700), but is still 13% lower than pre-pandemic (2,686,800 in 2019).
- The reported injuries number is not as high as pre-pandemic (2019).
- The total case rate remained the same as the previous two years (2.7 cases per 100 FTE workers).

Days Away from Work, Job Restriction or Transfer (DART) Data (2021-2022)

- Exposure to harmful substances/environments, including COVID:
 - In health care/social service, the annualized rate of exposure was 110.5 per 10,000, more than three times the exposure in all industry (33.1).
 - In grocery/retail, the annualized rate of exposure was more than four times higher (134.1) than in all industries (33.1).
- Workplace violence:
 - The rate of overall WPV continues to remain high in all industries (4.3) while the rate of overall injuries/illnesses continues to see a decline (112.9) for DAFW.
 - In health care/social service, the WPV DART annualized rate (20.6) was more than three times higher than the rate of WPV in all industries (6.2).
 - To compare this data to the previous year (2020), look at DAFW:

- 4.3 WPV annualized rate overall compared to 4.0 rate in 2020
 - 13.8 in health care/social service compared to 15.0
 - 21.6 in hospitals compared to 22.9
 - 29.4 in nursing and residential care compared to 30.8
 - 11.8 in social assistance compared to 9.6
- Ergonomics:
 - Overexertion and bodily reaction events result in more injuries with DJTR than DAFW but are still the top injury for both (23% of DAFW injuries, 42% of DJTR injuries, and 30% of DART injuries).
 - There were more musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) reported than pre-pandemic, also seeing an increase in MSD injuries that resulted in DJTR.
- Totals:
 - Over the two years, there were 502,380 DAFW + 473,700 DJTR.
 - This is an average per year of 251,190 DAFW + 236,850 DJTR, which compares to the 266,530 DAFW + 207,301 estimated DJTR pre-pandemic (2019). ■

Safety Awareness Dates and Events for Your Calendar

April 25, [World Day for Safety and Health](#)
 May, [Building Safety Month](#)

U.S.

April 28, [Workers Memorial Day](#)
 May, [Mental Health Month](#)
 May 1-5, [National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Workplace Falls](#)
 May 6-10, [Construction Safety Week](#)
 June, [National Safety Month](#)
 June 1-7, [CPR & AED Awareness Week](#)

Canada

April 28, [Day of Mourning](#)
 May 6-11, [Safety and Health Week](#)
 June 11, [Canadian Safety Summit](#)

If you or someone you know needs immediate help, please contact:



[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)— a free and confidential (U.S.) resource that connects individuals with skilled, trained counselors 24/7. Call 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
 Use the [online Lifeline Crisis Chat](#)
 or reach out to the Crisis Text Line by texting “HELLO” to 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor.