



AGC OF CALIFORNIA

MENTAL HEALTH STAND DOWN TOOLKIT & SAFETY MANUAL

- Stand Down Talking Points
- Checklist for a Successful Stand Down
- Partner Invitation to Participate Template
- Script Guidelines
- Toolbox Talk
- Available Resources

Approved & Developed by AGC of California Safety & Health Council





Associated General Contractors of California Stand Down
Mental Health Awareness Month Call to Action – May 2023
Talking Points

Building a more resilient California requires the voices of all Californians at the table. To achieve this, AGC of California's Safety & Health Council believes the overall well-being of Californians is paramount. In order to elevate the conversation during Mental Health Awareness Month, the Council voted to approve a Mental Health Awareness Month initiative that begins on May 2023.

In 2022, the Safety & Health Council recognized a concerning increase Mental Health issues in the construction industry. As a result, the Safety & Health Council created a comprehensive mental health toolkit intended for everyone, regardless of their affiliation with the construction industry, to effectively address mental health concerns. To highlight the importance of mental health, we will initiate a call to action for all AGC of California members to provide individual stand downs on their respective job sites throughout the month of May for Mental Health Awareness Month.

The stand downs are an opportunity for employers to have conversations about mental health, which encompass suicide prevention and substance use disorders and educate workers on alcohol and opioid addictions. It gives each employer the opportunity to discuss safety policies, goals, and resources it has for every employee and worker.

Over the past few years, tens of thousands of companies participated in various stand-downs reaching millions of employees across all 50 states and internationally! By continuing to reach millions of employees with a specific Stand Down toolkit, AGC of California hopes to combat the statistics around mental health within construction and ensure the well-being of each worker, both physically and mentally.

Participation is not limited to the construction industry, and no business is too small to participate.

AGC of California is leading the way to prepare our industry for long-term sustainable growth and ensure everyone in the industry understands that their well-being is of the utmost importance in our efforts to build California.



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Talking Points (cont')

Partners:

How to Help: Partners can help in many different ways including: hosting or organizing public stand-down events, encouraging organization members to participate, sending stand down information by email or in newsletters, providing stand-down resources to members or stakeholders, contacting local media to share stand-down events or success stories. If you have other ideas for ways to help, please contact Tresten Keys at keyst@agc-ca.org.

Associations, Unions, Worker Interest Organizations: Associations, unions and organizations can spread the word to all members via email, newsletters or by posting information on their websites and talking about the stand down at meetings, trainings, or events. Groups may also be able to personalize stand-down posters and training resources for members to use.

Institutes/Training Centers: Many groups provide training and offer special free or discounted training – both in person and online – on mental health. This is a great way to build relationships within the industry and spread awareness!

AGC Members as Partners: AGC of California members can involve their entire workforce across the country and internationally. AGC of California members can push out information campaigns with ideas and suggestions on how to hold a stand down to all their offices. Some large employers also host or co-host stand-down events, including events open to the public.

Material Suppliers: Material suppliers can ask employers to consider raising awareness on mental health. One idea is to include fliers about the stand down with construction material orders or services sent on-site.

Insurance Companies: Insurance companies know that mental health is extremely important to the overall wellbeing of a company and education and awareness may reduce injuries and illness. Insurance companies can help get the word out about the stand down through newsletters or emails to customers.



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Employers:

Any company can join AGC of California's call to action to host stand downs on their respective job-sites throughout the month of May. Companies may participate by providing focused toolbox talks such as suicide prevention and recognizing the signs and symptoms of alcohol, opioid or substance abuse. We encourage those that participate to take photos and submit them to AGC of California, with the intent to break the stigma by showing the number of stand down meetings that are held.

It is important for employers to identify local resources available to employees (such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (988), what an Employee Assistance Program is and what resources are available through employment of each company. Companies can also attend or host public events, watch a safety video, or create a video of their own to share with employees. In past stand downs across the nation and world, several companies participated in a safety poster contest and others shared real-life stories of their struggles with mental health and lessons learned. The important thing is to do something that increases awareness.

Resources:

AGC of California has posted FREE resources on mental health, suicide prevention and substance use disorders to provide a menu of options for employers to hold stand-downs. Resources include links to supportive websites, fact sheets, safety and HR manuals, posters, videos, and recorded WebEds hosted by AGC of California.

Connect Online:

AGC members, partners and employers can follow AGC of California on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. We encourage everyone to write a message about mental health, use #SafetyStandDown in the post, and tag AGC of California to show support to our industry and help build awareness. You can also send photos directly to Tresten Keys (keyst@agc-ca.org) who will be putting together a slide show of all the stand down meetings that occurred during May 2023.



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Checklist of a Successful Stand Down

In advance of the stand down, make time to meet and review the information below with each stand down leader/presenter and communicate with the leadership of each participating project team and contractor about the stand down.

1. Review all stand down materials:

- a. Discuss the best approach to promote worker engagement and interest on this important topic.
- b. Preview the information and toolbox talk within this toolkit as well as review the material linked below:
 - i. The link to: <https://www.agc-ca.org/resources/safety-health/mental-health-initiative/>
- c. Consider using the presentations included on our AGC of California site here: <https://www.agc-ca.org/sites/mental-health-initiative/safety-training-prevention/>
 - i. **Creating a Culture of Caring: Suicide Prevention in Construction**
 1. Cal Beyer, CWP – CSDZ
 - ii. **When & How to Talk to Construction Workers About Suicide Prevention**
 1. Cal Beyer, CWP – CSDZ
 - iii. **Mental Health & Wellbeing in the Construction Industry: 2021 Pulse Survey Results and Report**
 1. Cal Beyer, CWP – CSDZ & Darcy Gruttadaro, J.D – APA Foundation
 - iv. **Opioid Use Prevention PPT Template**

2. Communicate the stand down details:

- a. Coordinate with project leadership regarding their plans for the stand down.
- b. Determine how the stand down will be advertised at each project.
- c. Invite trade partners, contractors, and owners to participate in the project stand down.
- d. Understand the critical importance of everyone being able to *see and hear* the presenter(s) and any presentation materials.
- e. Utilize more than a speaker to send the message. Visual aids and hand outs are a great way to re-emphasize the point.



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Checklist of a Successful Stand Down (cont')

3. Document the stand down:

- a. Take photos and videos at your stand down.
- b. Fill out the AGC Mental Health QR code or click **here**. These submissions will be used to create PowerPoint slides which will be turned into a slideshow.
- c. The slides will be used to promote not only your company's dedication to mental health, but to also spread awareness and encourage others to break the stigma surrounding mental health.
- d. Please share all photos or movies on social media and tag AGC of California on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.



4. Questions or Comments:

- a. Contact with any questions:
 - i. Tresten Keys | keyst@agc-ca.org



Associated General Contractors of California Stand Down
Mental Health Awareness Month Call to Action
Partner Invitation to Participate

Date

Name

Partner

Address

RE: Mental Health Stand Down

Dear Partner,

On [date], we will hold our Mental Health Stand Down as part of AGC of California's call to action and Mental Health Awareness Month Initiative, suspending work on our project in [project name, and location] to engage our people, workers, and partners on this important topic.

This stand down is a time when we take time out from our daily tasks to build awareness, provide resources, and reflect on the topic of mental health.

At [project name] we will gather for our stand down at [time & location.] We would love to have you there. Your attendance and participation will help set the tone for the stand down and demonstrate you and your firm's commitment to raising awareness on mental health. Please connect/coordinate with our project manager [name] if you'd like to participate.

Sincerely,
Company name

[First, last]
[Title]



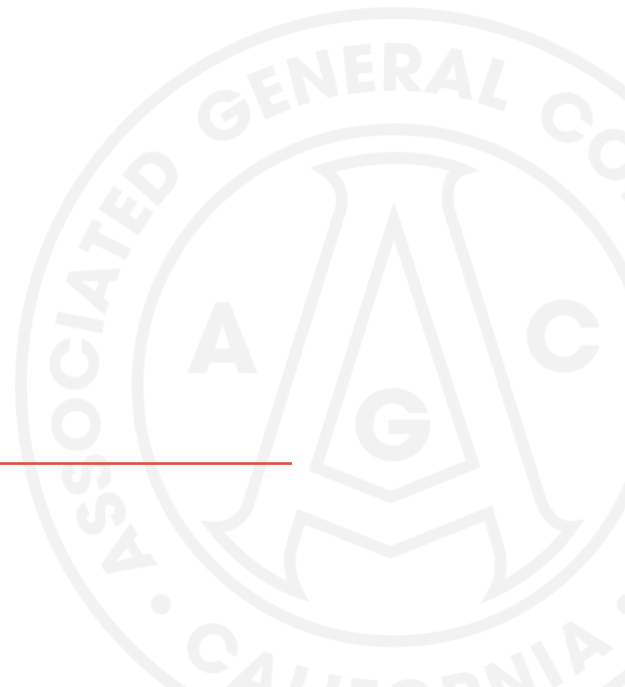
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Script Guideline

- Hi, my name is ___ I am the [title] with [company name].
- I/We want to thank Associated General Contractors of California for partnering with us and helping facilitate this mental health stand down today. For mental health awareness month, across the state of California, employers, and employees, like you, are voluntarily stopping work to focus on the important topic of mental health. Mental health is a challenge that is 24 hours a day and seven days a week (24/7). Thank you for recognizing this vital issue by standing down with us here today.
- This is our inaugural safety stand down with the goal of raising awareness, providing resources, and reducing the stigma involved with mental health. We want to raise awareness so we, as an industry, prepare for long-term sustainable growth and ensure everyone in the industry understands that their well-being is of the utmost importance in our efforts to build California.
- On June 25, 2022, President Biden signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to address the Mental Health Crisis in America by expanding vital Mental Health Services, and supporting states to promote safer, more inclusive, and positive school; environments for all students, educators, and school staff. Mental health does not just affect you directly, but indirectly as well through kids, loved ones, family, and friends. By understanding this we want to raise awareness, elevate the conversation. It's okay to not be okay. Resources are available to help you, and we as employers are here to help you.
- A 2020 study found that 83% of construction workers have experienced a mental health issue, and on top of that, suicide rates have skyrocketed over the years due to the negative stigma associated with mental health in the construction industry.
- With 53.2 suicides per 100,000 workers, construction has among the highest suicide rate of any industry according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
- In 2021, more than 71,000 people died from synthetic opioid-related drug overdose in the United States according to provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Recent data suggests that number continues to increase each year. There were 6,843 opioid-related overdose deaths in California; 5,722 of these deaths were related to fentanyl.



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Script Guideline (cont')

- Today, this month, and continuing forward, there is always an opportunity for your employers to have a conversation with you about mental health, suicide prevention, and substance use disorders. It can also be an opportunity to talk to your peers, management, and loved ones about what you see.
- So, why are we having a stand-down? Well, the reason is simple We, together, can make a difference on a unified front.
- This stand down, and others like it throughout the state of California and across the nation, is an opportunity for employers and employees to focus on mental health, suicide prevention, and substance use disorders. It is all about protecting our company's most valuable asset ... YOU!
- Mental health is an essential part of overall health and well-being. It affects how we think, feel, act. It also influences our ability to cope with stress, build relationships, and make healthy decisions. At the end of each workday, we want you to return home to your families. We want you to be healthy, mentally, and physically and return home and to each shift happy.
- Again, thank you for your partnership on this issue and for standing down to raise awareness on mental health.





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Toolbox Talk Options

Construction Safety Week

- [Mental Health, Addictions Recovery and Suicide Prevention](#)

Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention

- [AWARENESS - The Risk of Suicide in Construction](#)
- [NORMALIZE - How to Talk About Mental Health and Suicide](#)
- [DECREASE - Changing the Statistics of Suicide in Construction](#)

AGC of California

- [Preventing Unintentional Opioid Overdoses](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)

CSDZ

- [Risk of Alcohol or Substance Use Relapse Rising with COVID-19](#)

Toolbox Talk

- [Chris' Story](#)

Mental Health Statistics

National Substance Abuse

- According to a comprehensive study conducted between 2007–2012, “Construction occupations had the highest Proportional Mortality Ratios (PMRs) for drug overdose deaths and for both heroin-related and prescription opioid-related overdose deaths.”¹
 - 1.25 = 25% more than the national average (95% CI)



- “The occupation groups with the highest PMRs from methadone, natural and semisynthetic opioids, and synthetic opioids other than methadone were construction, extraction (e.g., mining, oil and gas extraction), and health care practitioners.”¹
- “The majority of drug overdose deaths were among persons who were male (61.8%), white (89.8%), and aged 45–54 years (30.1%) or 35–44 years (24.1%).”¹
- “Workers’ compensation data from 26 states (2013–2015) indicated that opioids were prescribed for 52%–80% of injured workers who received pain medications.”¹
- “According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) there were nearly 70,000 opioid-related overdose deaths in 2020 – a 36% increase over the previous year.”²
 - CDC/National Center for Health Statistics, 2021.
- “Around 15% of all construction workers in the United States have a substance abuse disorder compared to 8.6% of the general population of adults, according to data from the National Survey on Drug Use conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.”³
- 12% have an alcohol use disorder compared to 7.5% nationally.³
- 16.5% of construction workers reported heavy alcohol consumption within the past month, nearly twice the average of all full-time workers surveyed.³
- 11.6% of construction workers reported illicit drug use within the past month.³
- 14.3% of construction workers were diagnosed with a substance use disorder in the past year, more than 1 ½ times the average of all full-time workers surveyed.³
- Opioids account for 20% of the total spending on prescription drugs in the construction industry, a higher amount than any other industry.³
- Construction workers are 7 times more likely to die of an opioid overdose than workers in other industries.³
- Construction workers have the highest proportion of heroin-related overdose deaths.³



California Substance Abuse

- “In California, an estimated 45% of drug overdose deaths involved opioids in 2018; a total of more than 2,400 fatalities.” ⁴
- “According to the NSC’s cost calculator, every employee who recovers from a substance abuse disorder saves the company about \$3,200 per year.” ⁵

National Suicide

- “With 53.2 suicides per 100,000 workers, construction has among the greatest suicide rate of any industry, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.” ⁶
- “The report showed that 53.3 construction workers out of every 100,000 fall to suicide. A stark difference to the overall suicide rate of 12.93 people per 100,000 in the United States.” ⁷
- According to the last figures available from 2014, 42,773 Americans died by suicide (an average of 117 suicides per day). ⁷
- For every suicide, there are 25 attempts. ⁷
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. ⁷
- Men die by suicide 3.5x more often than women. ⁷
- White males accounted for 7 of 10 suicides in 2014. ⁷
- The rate of suicide is highest in middle age – white men in particular. ⁷

California Suicide

- “The Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention notes that the ‘suicide rate in the construction occupations is 49.4/100,000 – that is nearly four times greater than the national average and five times greater than that of all other construction fatalities combined.’” ⁸



General Mental Health

- “A 2020 study found that 83% of construction workers have experienced a mental health issue.” ⁹
- “41% of U.S. adults are now reporting symptoms of anxiety or depression-related disorders, much of which is attributed in part to the pandemic.” ⁹
- “ ... more than 80% of construction workers have experienced stress at work.” ¹⁰
- “Nearly 60% of construction workers reported struggling with mental health but only a third said they would communicate this to their employers.” ¹⁰
- “Research from Health Shield shows that 57% of workers would feel more loyal to their jobs, be more productive and take less time off work if their employer supported their mental well-being.” ¹⁰

References

Source ¹

Occupational Patterns in Unintentional and Undetermined Drug-Involved and Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths — United States, 2007-2012 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6107320/>

Source ²

CWPR: The Center for Construction Research and Training
<https://www.cpwr.com/research/research-to-practice-r2p/r2p-library/other-resources-for-stakeholders/mental-health-addiction/opioid-resources/>

Source ³

Substance Abuse Among Construction Workers (last updated July 2021)
<https://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/workforce/blue-collar-workers/construction-workers>

Source ⁵

Laborers' Health and Safety Fund of North America (June 2017)
<https://www.lhsfna.org/the-real-cost-of-substance-abuse/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20calculator%2C%20a,your%20company%20by%20clicking%20here>



Source ⁶

Warning signs of suicide; construction industry has high prevalence (Sept 2021)

<https://www.lenconnect.com/story/business/2021/09/19/warning-signs-suicide-construction-industry-has-high-prevalence/8379691002/>

Source ⁷

Suicide is Taking its Toll in Construction

<https://www.iupat.org/news/suicide-is-taking-its-toll-in-construction/>

Source ⁸

RELEASE: ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS OF CALIFORNIA SPONSOR ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION TO RAISE AWARENESS ON SUICIDE PREVENTION IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY (March 2021)

<http://www.abcofca.org/News/Press-Releases-News/entryid/18643/Default#:~:text=The%20Construction%20Industry%20Alliance%20for,all%20other%20construction%20fatalities%20combined.%E2%80%9D>

Source ⁹

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in Construction

<https://constructible.trimble.com/construction-industry/mental-health-in-construction-stats>

Source ¹⁰

The Biggest Danger in Construction Work Is Poor Mental Health (August 2021)

<https://www.ehstoday.com/construction/article/21171410/the-biggest-danger-in-construction-work-is-poor-mental-health>