



NFIB Ohio Workers' Compensation Program

# SAFETY VISIONS

Fall 2025

*This issue contains essential safety articles to help you comply with Ohio's workers' compensation regulations to effectively manage your small business this winter.*

- 1 • US Department of Labor - Penalty Guideline Updates to Help Support Small Business  
• OHBWC Reopens Safety Grant Program
- 2 • Common Reasons New Employees Get Injured  
• Avoiding Collisions with Deer
- 3 • OSHA 300 Log: Recordkeeping Guidelines
- 4 • Is a Trench Box Considered a Confined Space?

## SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS

The updated guidelines introduce a more flexible approach to penalties, emphasizing education and assistance.

## U.S. Department of Labor *updates penalty guidelines to help support small business*

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recently updated its penalty guidelines. These changes are particularly significant in the current economic climate, where small businesses strive to recover from the impacts of the pandemic and ongoing inflation.

Historically, the DOL has enforced a range of penalties for violations related to labor laws, which can be particularly burdensome for smaller operations. The updated guidelines are designed to help small businesses better understand their obligations and foster a culture of compliance. For example, the DOL may offer more leniency by allowing businesses time to rectify violations. By focusing on collaboration rather than punishment, the DOL aims to ensure that small businesses can thrive while maintaining compliance.

These updates reflect a broader trend towards recognizing the essential role that small businesses play in the economy. By easing the financial pressure from penalties, the DOL hopes to encourage growth and innovation among these enterprises. Overall, the revised penalty guidelines signify a commitment to supporting small businesses, ensuring they can operate successfully while upholding employees' rights and protections.

**For more information:** Email Sedgwick's [Kory Bakenhaster](#) or call **(614) 932-1516**.

## Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation Reopens Safety Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2026

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) continues its Safety Intervention Grant (SIG) for the 2026 fiscal year. The Safety Intervention Grant (SIG) Program is available to any Ohio private or public employer covered by the State Insurance Fund. **Over \$41 million is available and allocated**, and applications are currently being accepted.

The SIG can be used to purchase specific equipment to enhance employee safety. Recipients are eligible for a 3-to-1 matching grant, up to a **maximum grant award of \$40,000 for each eligibility cycle**. This means you can get \$3 for every \$1 you contribute as the employer. In return, employers must submit a one-year case study one year after the implementation date of the intervention. More information can be found [online](#).

**For more information:** Email Sedgwick's [Kory Bakenhaster](#) or call **(614) 932-1516**.

**How likely are new hires to be injured on the job?** If you guessed five times more likely, you would be right! The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Office of Statistics reports that forty percent of employees injured at work have been on the job less than one year. Some reasons why new employees get hurt more often include:

- Employers think new employees know more than they really do, and that safety is common sense.
- New employees may hesitate or be afraid to ask questions. They may also not know emergency procedures or how to navigate the workplace safely.
- New employees are trained on how to perform a job, but not about the hazards associated with the job.
- New employees are not given the knowledge necessary to work with hazardous substances and materials.
- New employees do not understand the importance of properly using the Personal Protection Equipment for the job.
- If safety is not a clearly valued issue by leadership, new hires will not prioritize safety either.

The following tips can help prevent new employee injuries:

- Hiring right – Thoughtful hiring practices can help ensure candidates are a good fit and help new hires understand safety expectations from the start.
- Identifying hazards - Know the main causes of injuries or potential injuries for your industry and business.
- Training Properly - Take the time to provide new employees the training needed before they put themselves or other employees at risk on the job. Training should start with a safety orientation on day one, and should continue throughout their employment with your company.



## Common Reasons New Employees Get Injured

Hire Right. Identify Hazards. Train Properly.

**For more information:** Email Sedgwick's [Jim Saulters](#) or call (513) 858-5022.

## Avoiding Collisions with Deer

While Fall is a beautiful time of the year, from October to December drivers must remain vigilant on the roads to avoid deer-vehicle collisions. Due to mating season, deer movement increases dramatically during this timeframe, and limited lighting makes it more difficult for drivers to see them on or near roads. Below are some important tips to keep you safe from animal crashes.

- Always maintain a safe amount of distance between your vehicle and others, especially at night. If the vehicle ahead of you hits a deer, you could also become involved in the crash.

- Slow down in areas posted with deer crossing signs and in heavily wooded areas, especially during the late afternoon and evening.

- Know where deer roam and that they roam together. Most deer-vehicle crashes occur where deer are more likely to travel, near bridges or overpasses, railroad tracks, streams and ditches. Deer also travel in small herds, so if you see one deer near a road, be on the lookout for others.

- Drive with high beams on when possible and watch for deer eyes reflecting in the headlights.

- If you see deer near a road, slow down and blow your horn with one long blast.

- Do not swerve to avoid a collision. This could cause you to lose control of your vehicle and cause a more serious crash.

- If your vehicle does strike a deer, do not touch the animal. A frightened and wounded deer can be dangerous or further injure itself. Get your vehicle off the road, if possible, and call 911.

ACCORDING TO THE HUMANE  
SOCIETY OF AMERICA, THERE ARE

**1.5 MILLION**

DEER-VEHICLE ACCIDENTS  
EACH YEAR.







## OSHA 300 Log RECORDKEEPING GUIDELINES

According to OSHA, an injury or illness must be recorded if it meets *all* of the following conditions:

### A NEW CASE

OSHA defines a new case as an employee who has not previously experienced a recorded injury or illness of the same type affecting the same body part, or as an employee who has fully recovered from a similar previous injury or illness, and a new workplace event or exposure caused symptoms to reappear.

### WORK-RELATED

MEETS ONE OR MORE OF  
OSHA'S RECORDING  
CRITERIA



EMPLOYERS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA) 300 LOGS MUST EVALUATE EACH WORKPLACE INCIDENT TO DETERMINE IF IT SHOULD BE RECORDED.

OSHA's recording criteria states that **an injury or illness is recordable if it:**

- Results in death.
- Results in days away from work, restricted work, or transfer to another job function (DART).
- Requires medical treatment beyond first aid.
- Involves the loss of consciousness.
- Is a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a licensed healthcare professional.

OSHA recognizes that not every injury or illness that occurs at work is work-related. **OSHA outlines nine specific exceptions** including cases where:

1. At the time of the injury or illness, the employee was present in the work environment as a member of the general public, rather than an employee.
2. The injury or illness involves signs or symptoms that surface at work, but result solely from a non-work-related event or exposure that occurred outside the work environment.
3. The injury or illness results from voluntary participation in a wellness program or in a medical, fitness, or recreational activity.
  - a. Examples would include blood donation, physical examination, flu shot, exercise class, or baseball.
4. The injury or illness is solely the result of an employee eating, drinking, or preparing food or drink for personal consumption.
  - a. For example, if an employee is injured by choking on a hamburger, while in the employer's establishment, the case would not be considered work-related. If the employee were made ill from food poisoning from ingesting food supplied by the employer, the case would be considered work-related.
5. The injury or illness is solely the result of an employee conducting personal tasks at the establishment, outside of the employees assigned work hours.
6. The injury or illness is solely the result of personal grooming or self-medicating for a non-work-related condition.
7. The injury or illness is caused by a motor vehicle accident and occurs on a company parking lot or company access road while the employee is commuting to or from work.
8. The illness is the common cold or flu. Contagious diseases such as Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, Hepatitis A, or plague are considered work-related if the employee is infected while at work.
9. The illness is a mental illness. Mental illness will not be considered work-related unless the employee voluntarily provides the employer with an opinion from a licensed health care professional with appropriate training and experience, stating the employee has a mental illness that is work-related.

**For more information:** Email Sedgwick's [Jim Saulters](#) or call (513) 858-5022.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), confined spaces are places that have a limited means of entry and/or exit, places large enough for a worker to enter it, and places that are not intended for regular or continuous occupancy. Some examples of confined spaces are sewers, pits, crawl spaces, attics, and boilers.

A trench box is not generally considered a confined space under OSHA regulations. OSHA's excavation standard (29 CFR Part 1926, Subpart P), which covers trenching and excavations, focuses on hazards like cave-ins and falls and requires protective systems such as trench boxes to shield workers from the falling soil. If workers enter something inside the trench, such as a sewer line, manhole, or vault, that is a confined space, then the employer must follow both the excavation standard for the trench and the confined space standard for that structure.

**For more information:** Email Sedgwick's **Jim Saulters** or call (513) 858-5022.

