



**NCDOL**

*N.C. Department of Labor*

*Cherie Berry, Commissioner*

# Labor

**LEDGER**

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## Alliances Play Important Role in Workplace Safety and Health

*By Mary Katherine Revels, Public Information Officer*

**C**arolinas AGC (Associated General Contractors) recently renewed its long-standing alliance with the NCDOL Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Division.

The alliance, which was first signed, March 22, 2010, aims to reduce accidents and fatalities in the construction industry through increased education, training and outreach. Carolinas AGC is a construction trade association made up of contractors and construction-related firms that perform work in both North and South Carolina. The two entities furthered their alliance by signing a renewal alliance agreement Oct. 30, 2018.

The alliance also promotes safe and healthful working conditions by:

- Providing Carolinas AGC employees/members with information and guidance that will help them protect employees' health and safety, particularly in reducing and preventing exposure to recognized occupational hazards.
- Providing OSH employees with information and training on the industry's best practices.
- Increasing access to safety and health information and training resources.

"Our alliance with Carolinas AGC is extremely important to the construction industry in North Carolina," Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry said. "As one of the smallest state agencies, we need to work together with construction trade organizations such as Carolinas AGC to best reach those workers on the front lines doing some of the state's most hazardous work. We believe these types of relationships have helped drive down the state injury and illness rate for private industry to a historic low."

A new relationship formed Jan. 8, when NCDOL's OSH Division and the N.C. Association of Local Governmental Employee Safety Officials (NCALGESO) signed a two-year alliance agreement. The signing ceremony was held in Commissioner Berry's conference room in the Labor Building.

"We are very excited about the new alliance with NCALGESO," said Marcy Collyer, training supervisor with the Education, Training and Technical Assistance (ETTA) Bureau. "Collaboration with NCALGESO will help increase awareness about safety and health issues that affect public sector employees. Our ultimate goal is to ensure everyone goes home safely and this new alliance will help the OSH Division and the N.C. Department of Labor achieve that goal."

The NCALGESO was founded in 1975 and is committed to:

- The development of closer relationships and more effective cooperation among local governmental employee safety officials.
- Providing opportunities to freely discuss and exchange information, ideas, and experiences to keep members informed of current progress in the field of occupational safety and health.
- Fostering a spirit of cooperation with the N.C. Department of Labor and the N.C. Industrial Commission.
- The promotion, interest and welfare of North Carolina local governments.



*NCDOL and NCALGESO representatives formalize the partnership by signing a two-year alliance agreement. (L-R): Angie Whitley, NCALGESO president; Susan Tolbert, NCALGESO president-elect; Michelle Harris, NCALGESO past-president; Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry; Kevin Beauregard, OSH deputy commissioner; Wanda Lagoe, ETTA bureau chief.*

"NCALGESO is very honored to be chosen for NCDOL's alliance agreement," said Angie Whitley, NCALGESO president. "Our organization looks forward to becoming advocates with NCDOL in providing outreach training, focusing on employee safety and health issues with broader communications and partnership opportunities throughout the state. Thank you to Commissioner Berry and her staff for entrusting NCALGESO with this collaboration."

Under the alliance, the OSH Division and NCALGESO will work together to achieve certain training and educational goals, outreach and communication goals, and to promote a statewide dialogue on workplace safety and health.

In an effort to support the National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls, May 6-10, both Carolinas AGC and NCALGESO will be assisting with NCDOL construction forums. The forums will be day long events with a focus on the Big Four hazards in construction, falls, electrical, struck-by and caught-in.



### **From Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry**

*It seems each year goes by more quickly than the previous. It is hard to believe January 2019 marks 18 years since I was sworn in as labor commissioner and what fun it has been. Best job I ever had.*

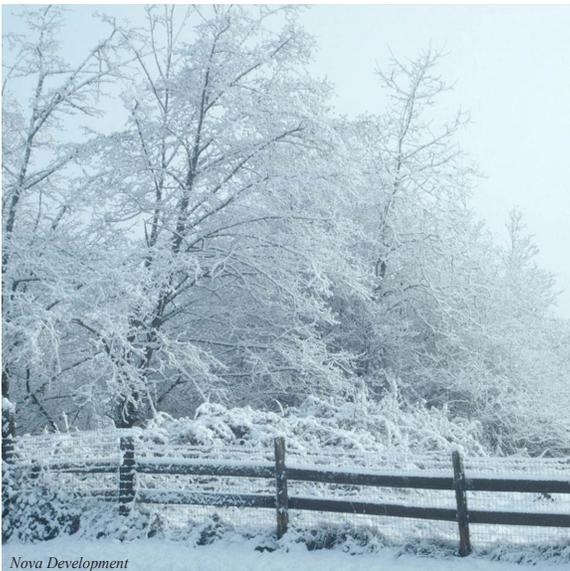
*Since the new year began, we formed a new relationship with NCALGESO by signing a two-year alliance agreement. With this new alliance we plan to work together to reach workplace safety and health goals. You can read more about this alliance and the alliance renewal with Carolinas AGC on page 1.*

*The end of 2018 wrapped up a major project in the Labor Building in Raleigh. The elevator modernization project took about four months and the updated elevator was certified to operate Dec. 10, 2018. Renovations included new walls, floors and doors, while the cab itself remains original. To read more about this exciting new project, see page 3.*

*The latest Occupational Fatality Inspection Review figures were released for calendar year 2018. Once again, the construction industry continued to be the most hazardous industry in the state, with 16 fatalities. A total of 39 fatalities occurred in calendar year 2018, one less than 2017.*

*Employers can utilize the free resources we provide to improve workplace safety and health programs. NCDOL offers safety and health training classes, free visits by the Consultative Services Bureau, and materials on the website among many other opportunities. Our work will not be done until there are zero workplace fatalities.*

*Cherie Berry*



Nova Development

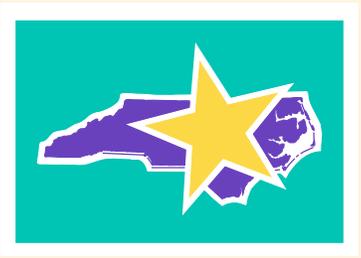
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# Inside this edition:

Newly Modernized Elevator Lifts Us Up	page 3
NCDOL Provides Elevator Training	page 4
Struck-by Incidents and Falls Lead Work-Related Deaths	page 5
Safety Award Applications Now Being Accepted	page 6
Deadly Mistakes	page 6
Workplace Worries	page 6
Bulletin Board	page 7

## Recognition Roundup

Be on the lookout for new Carolina Star and SHARP sites in the coming months.



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# Newly Modernized Elevator Lifts Us Up

By Natalie Bouchard, Public Information Officer

There have been many ups and downs here at the N.C. Department of Labor building since August—and the elevator was not one of them. Functionally speaking, the elevator was out of order from Aug. 27 through Dec. 7, 2018, as the elevator inside the historical red-brick building, located in downtown Raleigh, was being modernized. The Labor Building was built in the late 1800s and originally housed the Supreme Court and State Library.

Tom Chambers, chief of the Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau, and NCDOL’s in-house expert on all things elevators, said that the elevator went through its last modernization phase in the 1970s.

“The equipment was antiquated,” said Chambers. “It would break down more frequently because of its technology which was susceptible to the heat that it produced. The 2018 improvements will bring less maintenance and more efficiency for the elevator.”

Throughout the course of the revamping, the elevator was updated from an analog operating system to a digital system. The mechanical room, otherwise known as the “fifth floor” of the Labor Building, is no longer recognizable from its previous state. The room, which once housed a bulky generator and motors for operating the elevator, went through a complete demolition. It now contains a single computer and a more efficient microprocessing operating system.

More than just the operating system of the elevator was improved upon. Although the elevator still contains the original cab, the interior of the elevator was renovated to include new walls, floors and doors. The outside of the elevator doors also got a fresh coat of paint to match the trim in the lobby of the Labor Building.

The nearly four-month project was overseen by Carter Grimes, special assistant for governmental and constituent affairs, who also juggles the duties of overseeing building management projects such as this one.

“Although the project took a bit longer than anticipated,” Grimes said. “I think it’s safe to say that the Labor Building employees are thrilled with the updated design and the smooth ride of the new elevator.”



*Crews from Bar Construction and Elevator Specialists of Carolina install a digital operating system on the elevator in the Labor Building.*



*The placing of the elevator inspection certificate finalizes the elevator modernization project. The first ride in the updated elevator took place Monday, Dec. 10, 2018.*

State Construction contracted Bar Construction based out of Greensboro and Elevator Specialists of Carolina located in Raleigh to take on the project.

The elevator was inspected by NCDOL and certified to operate on Dec. 10, 2018, two days before Commissioner Berry’s Christmas Open House, which is the culmination of the annual Toys for Tots donation drive. During the open house, nearly 900 toys that were donated by NCDOL employees had to be moved up and down floors in the Labor Building.

“It was a much-needed update,” said Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry. “We are grateful that the elevator was finished and inspected just in time for this special event.”

Some NCDOL employees had to inhabit temporary office spaces due to the elevator modernization project. Those employees are back in their normal work spaces and all employees in the Labor Building are able to ride a safe and fully functional elevator once again.



Christmas morning 2018 Cayden Ludlow holds a car position indicator and car call buttons salvaged from the elevator modernization project. Cayden made a visit to the N.C. Department of Labor building where Tom Chambers, the bureau chief for the Elevator and Amusement Bureau, made him an honorary inspector for his birthday July 19, 2017. To learn more about Cayden and his love for elevators, see this article from the July–August 2017 edition of the *Labor Ledger*.

*Photo Credit: Whitney Ludlow*

# NCDOL Provides Elevator Training for Emergency Personnel

By Mary Katherine Revels, Public Information Officer

Have you ever wondered where phones inside elevators are directed during emergency situations? The phone is required and is typically programmed to dial either the elevator company, the building manager or 911. Of these calls, 30 percent dial elevator companies and building managers, while 70 percent dial 911. Phones that are programmed to dial 911, are answered by an operator who will usually dispatch local emergency personnel.

Once emergency personnel arrive, what happens next? Are they equipped to safely handle the entrapment situation? The answer is yes, because many of the emergency personnel across the state have received training provided by the Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau. The free training instructs emergency personnel on how to safely remove individuals trapped in an elevator.

“We have been offering this class for a number of years,” said Wesley Tart, a supervisor of the Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau. “This training is important because fire departments need this information now more than ever with the increase in elevators across the state.”

Once emergency personnel have assessed the situation and determine there is not an immediate need for removing the trapped individuals, they are trained to wait for the elevator company to arrive. It is very dangerous to open the doors and disable the mechanics of the elevator. The elevator company will know the machine and the best way to safely perform the evacuation.

“Elevators are the safest mode of transportation,” Tart said. “If any part of the design is destroyed during an evacuation, that is when elevators can become deadly.”

During the training, emergency personnel learn about the working parts of an elevator and receive hands-on training on how to conduct a safe evacuation.

Emergency personnel interested in arranging a free training class can contact the Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau at 919-707-7927. Typically, the training sessions are held during the winter months.



*Wesley Tart, Elevator and Amusement Device supervisor, explains best practices involving elevator entrapments for the Holly Springs Fire Department. The class was held Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2019, in a training room located in the basement at the Holly Springs Fire Department.*

Be sure to check out the NCDOL podcast **Inside NC Labor**. Episodes four and five include special guests Tommy Petty (*left*), Elevator and Amusement Device Bureau, and Todd McNoldy (*right*), Research and Policy Division. **Inside NC Labor** is designed to inform and educate North Carolina citizens on the role that the Department of Labor plays in state government.



Follow **NCDOL** on:

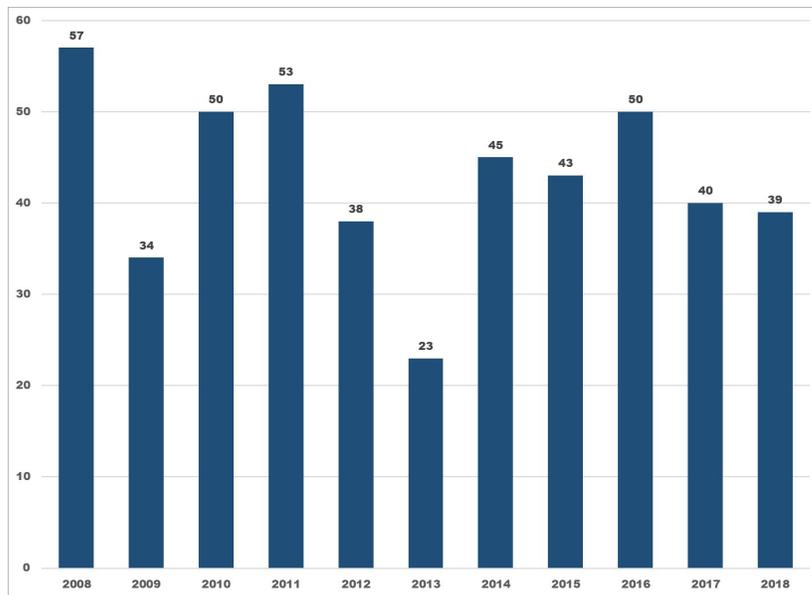


# Struck-by Incidents and Falls Lead Work-Related Deaths Within the State OSH Division’s Jurisdiction

By Dolores Quesenberry, Communications Director

Struck-by incidents and falls caused the largest number of work-related deaths in the Tar Heel state in 2018, based on preliminary information released today by the state Department of Labor. Struck-by incidents accounted for 14 work-related deaths while falls accounted for nine. There were 39 work-related fatalities that fell under the jurisdiction of the NCDOL’s Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Division in 2018, one less than in 2017.

The state Occupational Fatality Inspection Review (OFIR) figures exclude certain fatalities that fall outside its jurisdictional authority such as traffic accidents, which account for nearly half of all work-related deaths, as well as homicides and suicides that are investigated by law enforcement agencies. The count also excludes fatalities investigated by federal OSHA, sole proprietorships and other exemptions in which the department does not have the authority to investigate, such as on farms with 10 or fewer employees.



“Each of these individuals are valued members of North Carolina’s workforce and each death is a major blow to their families and communities,” Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry said. “It is important that we track these fatalities and create awareness of these common work-related hazards so that we can better focus our resources and work to prevent future incidents.”

The construction industry continues to be the most hazardous industry in the state with 16 work-related deaths in 2018, one less than in 2017. The N.C. Department of Labor places special emphasis on hazardous industries like construction to maximize its resources and pinpoint problem areas.

Part of the OSH Division strategy to reduce work-related fatalities includes encouraging employer and employee participation in various safety and health outreach activities. The OSH Division also works with businesses and organizations that represent some of the most hazardous industries through partnerships and alliances to heighten industry awareness and assist with education and training.

The OSH Division has participated in a federal OSHA campaign to prevent falls in construction for the past five years. This year the National Safety Stand-Down to prevent falls takes place May 6–10.

“It is encouraging to see a decrease in falls from 13 in 2017 to nine in 2018, and we hope this downward trend will continue,” said Kevin Bearegard, director of the NCDOL OSH Division. “I encourage all construction companies to participate in the stand-down and focus on fall prevention efforts on construction sites to help reduce these preventable deaths”

“In addition, the OSH Division will increase construction-related activity in some counties in the spring, especially those identified as having high activity or multiple fatalities,” Bearegard said.

The manufacturing industry had the second highest number of work-related deaths with eight, a decrease from 11 in 2017. Transportation and public utilities increased from one in 2017 to four in 2018. Another notable increase involved the services industry, which increased from zero to four in 2018.

Government decreased from five in 2017 to one. The wholesale trade industry decreased from one in 2017 to zero.

There were no work-related fatalities in 69 of North Carolina’s 100 counties. Forsyth, Guilford, Lee, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Scotland, Stokes and Wake experienced two each. Twenty-three counties experienced one fatality.

Whites accounted for 21 of the 39 work-related fatalities. Blacks accounted for eight and Hispanics for nine. There was one Native American fatality. Men accounted for 37 of the 39 deaths. Women accounted for two workplace deaths.

Federal figures compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, with cooperation of NCDOL, include all work-related fatalities. The federal figures can be found on the BLS [website](#).

While fatalities continue to fluctuate, North Carolina’s injury and illness rate has steadily declined since 2001 and remains at a historic low 2.3 per 100 full-time workers for 2017. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics compiles the injury and illness rate data. To learn more, tune in to *Inside NC Labor*.



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## Safety Award Applications Now Being Accepted

By Natalie Bouchard, Public Information Officer

The N.C. Department of Labor is now accepting applications from businesses that qualify for a workplace safety award. Safety awards are presented to companies throughout the year that have demonstrated above-average worker safety and health programs.

“Our safety awards program recognizes employers and employees that are committed to promoting safe work environments in their communities,” Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry said. “It is always a great honor to recognize those businesses and organizations that go beyond the standard, for a good safety record is something they can be quite proud of.”

Businesses that qualify for the award must meet two criteria. They must be free of fatalities at the site for which they are applying. The site’s injury and illness rate also must be at least 50 percent below that of their industry’s average rate.

Award recipients will be honored in their communities throughout the state at safety awards banquets co-sponsored by the N.C. Department of Labor, local chambers of commerce, the Safety and Health Council of North Carolina and other organizations.

For more information on the Safety Awards Program or to download an application, visit the [NCDOL website](#). The deadline for submissions is Friday, Feb. 15.

## DEADLY Mistakes



By Judyth Niconienko, State Plan Coordinator

**Fatal Event:** On May 15, 2017, a 47-year-old man died at a lumber company after losing his balance and falling about 12 feet from a platform to the concrete floor below. He sustained fatal head injuries.

**Investigative findings:** The employee had worked for the lumber company for 23 years and his job was to operate the end trimmer saw. He was servicing this equipment at the time of the accident.

The end trimmer saw required weekly maintenance and intermittent repairs that included: greasing bearings within the eight saw blade motors and drive train, inspecting and replacing flywheels, adjusting drive belts and removing saw blades for sharpening.

The end trimming saw had eight, 16-inch diameter-board cutting heads, and the victim was replacing a cracked flywheel on one of them at the time of the accident. The end of the trimming saw was located at the furthest point from the operator’s controls and on the back side of the machine. At the time of the incident he was located about 12 feet from the ground and working from an unprotected edge of the machine.

Employees interviewed revealed that walking and standing on the 30-inch-wide by 32-inch-deep edge of the end trimming trough inner frame and the 4-inch-wide outer frame, was routinely done by employees during specific equipment repairs such as replacing flywheels and greasing bearings.

There was no standard railing around the platform to prevent the employee from falling. While employees were performing

maintenance or repairs on the end trimming saw, no other type of fall protection was provided by the employer. The broken flywheel that the victim had been working on was found next to him on the concrete floor.

**Discussion:** During the investigation and inspection process several other locations in the sawmill where employees conducted maintenance activities without utilizing adequate fall protection were observed. It was determined that the facility failed to maintain an adequate fall protection program which placed their employees in jeopardy.

It was also noted during the investigation that citation items that were similar in nature had been issued to the employer during a prior inspection. Due to this, citation items issued to the employer were designated as ‘repeat serious’ violations which included higher monetary penalties.

**Recommendations:** OSHA’s General Industry standards, which apply to maintenance type activities, require workers who are 4 feet or more off the ground be protected from falls.

Therefore, guardrails or alternate fall protection are required to protect employees if:

- ✘ A raised floor, open-sided floor, work platform, ramp or walkway is 4 feet above the adjacent floor/grade level.
- ✘ On both sides of any walkway over or adjacent to any substance which is a hazard if a worker fell in or which is over machinery work areas.
- ✘ Around the perimeter of any open container or containment area such as an open bin which is 4 feet or more in depth and has sides that do not extend at least as high as required for a guardrail above the adjacent grade or work surface.
- ✘ A stairway ends in direct proximity to dangerous traffic or other hazards to prevent inadvertent entry into the dangerous area.

## WORKPLACE WORRIES



By Christine Ryan, Administrator, Labor Standards Section

**Q:** Has the minimum wage in North Carolina increased?

**A:** No. The minimum wage in North Carolina remains \$7.25 an hour. Under the Wage and Hour Act of North Carolina, our state’s minimum wage rate is tied to the federal minimum wage. If Congress passes a law to increase the federal minimum wage, then our state’s minimum wage would increase as well.





# Bulletin Board

## Mine and Quarry Training

### Part 46 New Miner Training

Feb. 12, Winston-Salem

### First Aid/CPR/AED Training

Feb. 13, Winston-Salem

### Part 46 Annual Refresher Training

Feb. 14, Winston-Salem

### New Miner Training

March 25–27, North Wilkesboro

April 15–17, Spruce Pine

### Annual Refresher Training

March 28, North Wilkesboro

April 18, Spruce Pine

To register for any of these classes, call the Mine and Quarry Bureau at 919-707-7932.

## 10-Hour Construction Industry Awareness Course

March 19–20, Greensboro

Click [here](#) for more information.

This course is designed to help employers understand OSH regulatory requirements and also ensure employers and employees understand the requirements necessary in providing an acceptable safety and health program for the workplace. This course will provide a basic overview of the Construction Industry Safety and Health Standards, 29 CFR 1926.

## 10-Hour General Industry Awareness Course

March 6–7, Greensboro

Click [here](#) for more information.

This course is designed to help employers understand OSH regulatory requirements and also ensure employers and employees understand the requirements necessary in providing an acceptable safety and health program for the workplace. This course will provide a basic overview of the General Industry Safety and Health Standards, 29 CFR 1910.

## N.C. Mine Safety and Health Conference

March 20–22, Cherokee

Click [here](#) for more information.

## OSH Webinar Courses

Visit the **OSH Training Schedule Calendar** to view upcoming internet training and other safety courses. Among the courses being offered include:

- ♦ Fall Protection
- ♦ Respiratory Protection
- ♦ Scaffolding
- ♦ Stairways and Ladders

## Long Term Care Workshop

May 7, Raleigh

Click [here](#) for more information.

May 21, Charlotte

Click [here](#) for more information.

This course provides an overview of safety and health hazards associated with the long term care industry. Nursing Home Administrators are eligible for 7.0 CEU credits.

## “National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls” May 6–10

- **PLAN AHEAD**
- **PROVIDE FALL PROTECTION**
- **TRAIN WORKERS**

