

WORKSAFE

safety, health, and justice for workers
seguridad, salud y justicia para los trabajadores

2020 IMPACT REPORT

STRONGER PANDEMIC PROTECTIONS FOR WORKERS

2020 Win: Cal/OSHA Enacts Emergency Rules for COVID-19 Prevention



In response to months of campaigning by workers and advocates, Cal/OSHA recently adopted new rules designed to strengthen COVID-19 protections for all California workers. The [COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standard](#) went into effect on December 1, 2020.

An incredible coalition of nearly 50 occupational safety and health (OSH) organizations, labor unions, worker centers, and community groups supported the effort to secure these vital workplace protections.

Huge thanks to everyone involved with [this campaign](#): those who crafted strategy, wrote letters, testified, and helped spread the word. It was truly a movement-wide effort made possible by dedicated workers and advocates from around the state. **The difficult work of outreach, education, and enforcement lies ahead – and we will do it together!**

2020

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Mid-March Worksafe convenes meetings of legal and labor allies to develop ideas for responding to the pandemic.	Early May We help develop and deliver a broad list of demands to state leaders, urging them to #ListenToWorkers .		5/20: Worksafe submits a petition to Cal/OSHA to initiate rulemaking for an emergency temporary standard for COVID-19 hazards.		7/16: Workers and advocates pack the July Standards Board meeting to make the case for stronger virus protections.		9/17: Workers and advocates convince the Cal/OSHA Standards Board to develop new workplace rules.		11/19: The Standards Board votes 6-0 to adopt new emergency rules to strengthen virus protections for workers.

HELPING WORKERS FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS

Worksafe is certified by the California State Bar to provide legal support services to the state's Qualified Legal Service Providers (QLSPs). As a Support Center, we aim to increase the capacity of QLSPs to assist low-income and immigrant clients facing workplace safety rights violations.



Bay Area Contractor Cited for Health and Safety Violations

After an investigation conducted by the [Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund](#), a group janitorial workers, with the aid of Worksafe and [Centro Legal de la Raza](#), filed complaints with Cal/OSHA because workers were being exposed to harsh chemicals without proper training, personal protective equipment, or emergency protocol. The citations, issued in August, total more than \$42,000. [Read the full press release here.](#)



Fact Sheet: The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

In July 2020, Worksafe published a new fact sheet: **Understanding Your Right to Refuse Unsafe Work in California**. Now available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#), these fact sheets present an overview of the issue as it relates to occupational safety and health law, a list of considerations for workers facing this difficult decision, and a brief exploration of remedies in the event of retaliation.



Video: Protecting Yourself at Work During Coronavirus

This year Worksafe collaborated with workers' rights attorney Scott Hochberg and the [Skadden Foundation](#) to produce two animated videos about workplace health and safety rights during COVID. The videos, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), explain how workers can keep themselves and their coworkers safe at work during the pandemic, and how workers can approach their employers to demand changes.

SHARING HEALTH & SAFETY KNOWLEDGE

In 2020, Worksafe promoted access to justice for low-wage and immigrant workers by providing free training and technical assistance to legal aid programs, worker advocacy groups, and unions. We continue to be the only legal services organization in California focused on worker health and safety.

1653 workers, advocates, and legal aid attorneys trained in 2020



Worker Safety During COVID-19
Free Trainings

Summer Training Series for Workers and Advocates

This summer Worksafe offered seven free workshops on occupational safety and health in the age of COVID-19. These webinars covered a range of urgent issues facing low-wage, immigrant, and workers of color:

- Worker safety and health fundamentals with a focus on COVID
- Spotting OSH issues and conducting worker-centered intakes
- Strategizing with workers to engage state agencies
- Filing a health and safety complaint with Cal/OSHA
- Review of most-know OSH standards that apply to COVID

[View video recordings of the seven summer workshops here.](#)

97% of trainees Strongly Agree or Agree they gained new knowledge about OSH (n = 122)

91% of trainees Strongly Agree or Agree they will apply what they learned (n = 122)

BOLD CAMPAIGNS FOR WORKER HEALTH

Protecting Workers from Wildfire Smoke

As climate change brings more frequent and destructive wildfires, California must be prepared to protect outdoor workers from the dangers of wildfire smoke. For the past two years, Worksafe has coordinated allies around the state to campaign for stronger protections for workers who are exposed to wildfire smoke on the job. In 2019, our coalition succeeded in getting Cal/OSHA to pass an emergency standard for wildfire smoke. In 2020, we focused on enforcement of the emergency rules, and we continued to campaign for a [strong permanent standard](#).

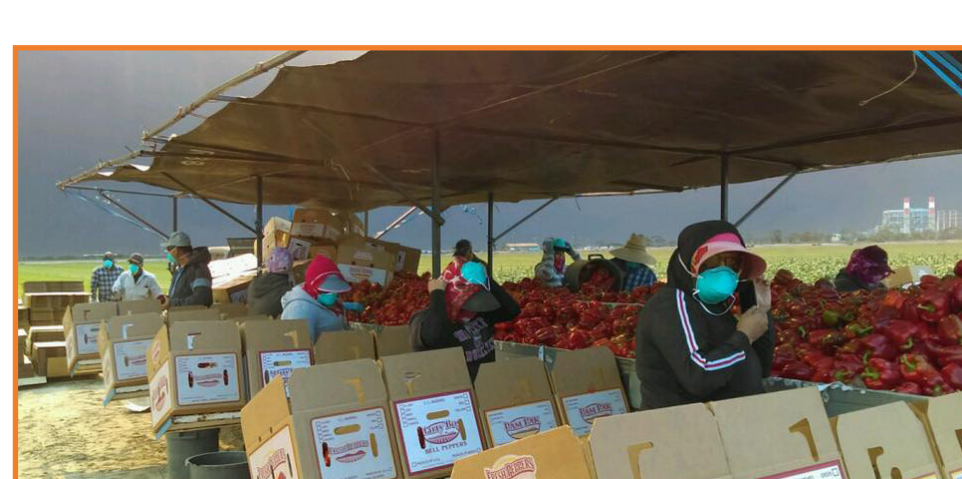


Photo by CAUSE

Health & Safety Rights for ALL Workers

In 2020, Worksafe was honored to co-sponsor SB 1257, the [Health and Safety for All Workers Act](#). This important legislation would have ended the historic, discriminatory exclusion of "household domestic service" from Cal/OSHA protections, and it would have required domestic work employers to provide their employees with a safe working environment – as is required in all other industries.

Unfortunately, Governor Newsom vetoed the bill, despite its strong support in the Senate and Assembly. SB 1257 was authored by [Senator Maria Elena Durazo](#) and co-sponsored by the [California Domestic Workers Coalition](#), Worksafe, [Equal Rights Advocates](#), [California Employment Lawyers Association](#), and [AFSCME-UDW](#).

Domestic worker leaders were an integral part of this campaign, sharing their stories on social media, explaining the need for this legislation at hearings, and mobilizing others. It is truly disappointing that the Governor could not recognize that these Californians deserve basic labor rights, but we will absolutely continue this effort in 2021. [Join us!](#)

BEARING WITNESS TO THE TOLL OF UNSAFE WORK



Rosary Castro-Olega, 63
Nurse Lost to COVID-19

Statewide Campaign for Workers Memorial Week

This year we collaborated with [SoCal COSH](#) and other California organizations to observe **Workers Memorial Week** with a week-long social media campaign. Each day of the week focused on a different aspect of worker health, safety, and justice – our goal was to raise awareness about workplace fatalities and urge California leaders and employers to protect workers from hazards, including COVID-19.



Dying at Work in California: Annual Report

On April 28, Worksafe released our ninth annual [Dying at Work in California](#) report. The release coincides with Workers Memorial Day, an international day of remembrance for those who have been hurt and killed on the job. As in past years, it included an overview of fatality data and trends, short profiles of deceased workers, and a detailed list of workplace fatalities that occurred last year.



Missing Miguel: A Family Copes with Workplace Tragedy

On April 19, 2019, Miguel did not return home from work. There had been an incident in the tow yard, and Miguel was fatally injured. His family didn't learn of his passing until the following day. He was barely 40 years old. [Read about Miguel's life and legacy here.](#) If you have lost a loved one to a work-related tragedy and would like to share your experience, [please contact Worksafe.](#)

EVOLVING AS A TEAM



Worksafe Welcomes New Executive Director

In January 2020, **Stephen Knight** joined the Worksafe team as our new Executive Director. Stephen has an extensive background as an advocate for social and economic justice – his career has been dedicated to work on economic inequality, affordable housing, refugee support, and the environment. [Read Stephen's bio and Q&A here.](#)



Departing Policy Director Leaves Lasting Imprint

In August 2020, **Nicole Marquez-Baker**, our Director of Policy and Legal Services, left Worksafe after eight impactful years. Nicole was instrumental in our efforts to pass strong Cal/OSHA standards for heat exposure, musculoskeletal injury in hotel housekeeping, and wildfire smoke hazards. She is now the National Employment Insurance at the [National Employment Law Project](#).



Jora Trang Honored by California Lawyers Association

In December 2020, the California Lawyers Association honored **Jora Trang**, Chief of Staff and Equity at Worksafe, with the [Loren Miller Legal Services Award](#). This award honors an attorney who has demonstrated long-term commitment to legal services and who has personally engaged in significant work extending legal services to the poor. [Learn more about Jora's work in this video.](#)

STAFF

Thais Forneret, Director of Development & Operations
Stephen Knight, Executive Director
Mara Ortenburger, Director of Communications & Research
Maggie Robbins, Occupational & Environmental Health Specialist
Jora Trang, Chief of Staff & Equity
Joan Uhlig, Office Manager
Karin Umfrey, Staff Attorney

BOARD

Laura Boatman – State Building & Construction Trades Council of CA
Justin Bosl – Kazan, McClain, Satterley, & Greenwood
Alor Calderon – Employee Rights Center
Matthew DeCarolis – Bet Tzedek
Purva Grover – UC Berkeley LOHP
Roberta Harrison – UCSF & CA Department of Public Health
Laura Kurre – California Teachers Association
Danielle Lucido – IFPTE Local 20
Ryan Spillers – Gilbert & Sackman
Mitch Steiger – California Labor Federation
Suzanne Teran – UC Berkeley LOHP
Cheryl Wallach – Ford & Wallach

Organization names are listed for identification purposes only

MISSION & VISION

Worksafe's mission is to prevent injury, illness, and death by bringing justice to the workplace. We envision a world where all workers and communities are safe and healthy.

WORKSAFE

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