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Increase in Workplace accidents slowing

Second annual Workplace Safety Report highlights safety outreach efforts

TOPEKA — Today is Workers Memorial Day – a day set aside to honor and remember those who lost their lives in work-related accidents. In conjunction with this commemoration, the Kansas Department of Labor has released the second annual *Workplace Safety Report*. The report indicates that while the number of injuries and illnesses occurring on Kansas worksites in 2008 continued an upward trend, there has been a decline in the rate of increase. In 2008, the number of workplace injuries and illnesses increased 1.52 percent from the previous year, compared to a 4.13 percent jump in 2007.

In addition, while the total number of workplace injuries and illnesses in the state were up in 2008, the number of severe injuries and fatalities declined from the previous year.

"There are some positive indicators in this new report, but we're not yet where we want to be," said Kansas Department of Labor Secretary Jim Garner. "This upward trend needs to be reversed, and that will only happen if we're successful in increasing awareness of safety in the workplace and of the resources available to help employers implement effective safety programs. The *2009 Workplace Safety Report* highlights our efforts to reach out to employers with that information."

The *2009 Workplace Safety Report* details efforts by the Department of Labor to target high-need employers with information about free safety consultations available through the KDOL's Division of Industrial Safety and Health. The effort had a 5 percent response rate - considered high for direct mail campaigns. Also highlighted are recognition programs designed to encourage and reward the implementation of effective workplace safety programs.

In addition, the report details the number of Kansas workplace accidents that have caused injuries, illnesses and fatalities over the past year. In 2008, more than 70,000 workplace accidents were reported in Kansas, and 43 Kansans lost their lives due to work-related accidents.

"It is fitting that we release this report in conjunction with Workers Memorial Day, a time set aside to remember and honor those who lost their lives while working on the job. And while we have this special day to honor their memory, we must keep in mind that we honor them best by committing ourselves every day to doing all we can to reduce workplace hazards," said Garner.

The Kansas Department of Labor offers several services to promote safe workplaces, including:

- Free workplace safety consultations for Kansas businesses;
- Free Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety training courses;
- SHARP and KSafe safety award recognitions for exemplary workplaces; and
- An annual safety and health conference for Kansas employers and safety professionals.

Workers Memorial Day commemorates the anniversary of the April 28, 1971, creation of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

For more information on how a business can receive a free safety consultation from the Kansas Department of Labor, call (785)296-4386. Read the entire report [here](#).

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