

# Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health

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## Commitment

April - June 2026



# Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health Division

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF HAWAII'OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DIVISION

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# Structure

## Intentional design

As I prepare to present on some of the most persistent and serious workplace hazards, I find myself thinking less about the equipment/machinery and more about how harm actually happens.

A machine doesn't always need a motor to be dangerous. Sometimes, all it needs is structure such as rails that guide movement, gravity that supplies force, or a pathway that allows electricity to travel unchecked. In many of the incidents we investigate, it isn't a lack of effort or intent that leads to injury but rather it's the lack of the right structure to control force.

Hawaii employees are a force as well. They bring talent, experience, and momentum to their job every day. When work is well designed (when roles are clear, hazards are anticipated, protections are in place, and communication flows) then those forces are guided safely and productively. But without structure, even the most capable worker can be placed in the path of danger.

The hazards we focus on in this issue are not new. Objects still fall. Trenches still collapse. Electricity still follows the path of least resistance. What these hazards share is not complexity, but predictability. We know how they behave. We know how electricity moves. However we also know that structure like guardrails, protective systems, lockout procedures, training, and supervision can change these outcomes.

Safety culture, at its core, is about designing work so that people are not required to rely solely on awareness, speed, or experience to stay safe. Rather it is about building structure or systems that account for human behavior and guide work safely, instead of relying on workers to avoid hazards on their own.

As we move through these topics together, I encourage employers, supervisors, and workers to think beyond the bare minimum requirements and consider structure: the planning, protections, and expectations that shape how work is done. When structure is intentional, force becomes productive—not injurious.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to protecting Hawai'i's workforce.

*Ednar Castillo*

*Compliance Assistance Specialist (Community Outreach)*

*The opinions expressed in "Editor's Note" do not necessarily reflect those of the agency, department, or affiliated.*

# NATIONAL SAFETY STAND-DOWN

## To Prevent Falls in Construction

May 4 - 8, 2026

### Stop Falls Stand-Down

- **Plan** ahead to get the job done safely.
- **Provide** the right equipment.
- **Train** everyone to use the equipment safely.

For More Information:

[osha.gov/stop-falls](https://www.osha.gov/stop-falls) | #StandDown4Safety



[www.labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh](http://www.labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh)

(808) 586-9100 | TDD/TTY Dial 711 then ask for (808) 586-9116



# What is a HIOSH Opening Conference?

## A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

When the Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH) arrives to conduct a workplace inspection, the very first step is called the Opening Conference. Think of it as a short, introductory meeting where everyone understands why HIOSH is there and what will happen next.

Prior to the opening conference, a company that is listed in the HIOSH award programs ([Hawaii Voluntary Protection Programs \(HVPP\)](#), and [Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Programs \(SHARP\)](#)) will be exempt from Programmed Plan Inspections.

### Why the Opening Conference Matters

The Opening Conference sets the tone for the inspection. It ensures that both employers and employees know their rights, understand the purpose of the visit, and have a chance to participate. It's not meant to be long or complicated, rather it is just a quick, clear briefing before the inspection begins.

### Who Attends?

HIOSH's Compliance Safety and Health Officer (CSHO) will meet with:

- Employer representatives
- Employee representatives

The goal is to hold a joint meeting, but if either side objects, the CSHO will meet with each group separately.

### What Happens During the Opening Conference?

#### 1. Purpose of the Inspection

The CSHO explains why they are there.

If the inspection is based on a complaint, the employer receives a copy (with the source's identity protected and confidential).

#### 2. Rights of Employers and Employees

Both sides are informed of their rights, including:

- The right to participate in the walkaround inspection
- The right to private employee interviews
- Protection from discrimination for participating in the inspection

#### 3. Hazard Assessment & PPE

The CSHO will:

- Request the employer's written certification that a hazard assessment has been completed (required by [§1910.132\(d\)](#))
- Ask about potential exposures
- Select appropriate personal protective equipment before entering the work areas

#### 4. Scope of the Inspection

The CSHO outlines what the inspection will include, such as:

- Physical walkaround of the workplace
- Review of records
- Possible referrals
- Private interviews
- The closing conference at the end





### 5. Video or Audio Recording

The CSHO may use video or audio to document conditions, just like taking notes or photos.

If an employer refuses recording, the CSHO may need to contact their manager—refusal can be treated as a denial of entry if recording is essential.

### 6. Immediate Abatement

If a violation is corrected immediately, the employer does not need to submit later certification paperwork.

### 7. Injury & Illness Records

Employers must provide required injury and illness records within four (4) business hours of the request.

However, the CSHO does not wait for the records to begin the walkaround—they start as soon as the Opening Conference ends.

### Abbreviated Opening Conference

If there's an urgent hazard or time-sensitive situation, the CSHO may shorten the conference to just:

1. Showing credentials
2. Stating the purpose of the visit
3. Explaining rights
4. Identifying representatives

Everything else will be covered later during the closing conference.

In the end, the HIOSH Opening Conference is a small but important part of every workplace inspection. By laying out the purpose, scope, and expectations from the very beginning, it helps employers and employees feel informed, prepared, and empowered to participate.

## HIOSH Field Operations Manual (FOM)

To learn more about the procedures followed by HIOSH Compliance and Safety and Health Officers (CSHOs) conduct, visit the website.

<https://labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/guidelines/directives/fom/>





## More than an award

### Recognizing Excellence in Workplace Safety & Health

- A symbol of excellence, and leadership
- Exemption from HIOSH Programmed Plan Inspections
- Public Recognition
- and more



[labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/cooperative-programs/hvpp](https://labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/cooperative-programs/hvpp)

# Keeping Our ‘Ohana Safe: A Guide to Hazard Identification

BY KEVIN WON, PROGRAM SPECIALIST V



In Hawaii, we know that looking out for one another is just part of who we are. Whether it's helping a friend move or sharing a harvest from the garden, our community thrives when we care for each other's well-being. At the Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH), we view workplace safety through that same lens of kūleana (responsibility).

Safety isn't just about following rules or wearing a hard hat; it starts with seeing the world around us a little more clearly. For this article, I want to focus on Hazard Identification and Assessment – the simple, proactive steps we can all take to spot trouble before it starts.

## What Exactly is a Hazard?

Think of a hazard as anything with the potential to cause harm. Some are obvious, like a spill on a slick tile floor, while others are "invisible," like high stress or poor air quality. By identifying these early and effectively addressing them, we protect our colleagues, our friends, our families and by extension, the communities of our islands.

## How to Spot Hazards

You don't need to be a professional inspector to make a difference. Here are four community-focused ways to assess your surroundings:

1. **The "Fresh Eyes" Walk:** Take 10 minutes to walk through your workspace as if you've never been there before. Look for obvious hazards like tripping hazards, frayed cords, or blocked exits.
2. **Talk Story:** Sometimes the person doing the job knows the risks best. Ask your coworkers, "Is there a part of your day that feels unsafe or clunky?" Often, a "clunky" process is actually a hidden hazard.
3. **Check the "Near Misses":** Did someone almost trip yesterday? That "almost" is a gift – it's a warning sign. Assessing why it happened helps prevent the actual fall tomorrow.
4. **Use a Checklist:** Both OSHA and HIOSH provide practical self-inspection checklists covering topics such as electrical safety and housekeeping. These resources help you proactively identify hazards before they lead to incidents. If a suitable checklist is not available for your specific operations, creating your own can be just as effective.

## Focus on Our Island

In Hawai'i, we face unique hazards—from extreme heat under the tropical sun to volcanic air quality issues and even the salt air's effect on metal equipment.

As we move into the warmer months, remember to assess Heat Stress as a major workplace hazard. Ensure there is plenty of water, shade, and time for rest.

Always remember that, "A Safe Workplace is a Productive One." When we identify hazards together, we spend less time worrying about accidents and more time focusing on the work that makes our islands great.

Mahalo for your commitment to keeping Hawaii's workforce safe and healthy.

## SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

For more information on instituting and maintaining an effective workplace safety and health culture visit the HIOSH website:

[labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/shms/](http://labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/shms/)



# Upcoming Events

## Online Webinars

### Description:

HIOSH will be hosting an online webinar each month from April through July, designed for employers and employees who register in advance to learn the basics of workplace hazards, the regulations that protect workers, and solutions to address these hazards. These sessions are intended solely for general awareness and do not serve as formal training or certification workshops.

Each session will focus on a different hazard topic: April – Struck-By Hazards, May – Fall Hazards, June – Trenching and Excavation Hazards, and July – Electrical Hazards.

Advance online registration is required to secure your seat. More information on the online event page.



### Struck By Hazards (April)

**Date:** Thursday, April 2, 2026

**Time:** 9 AM HST



Scan the QR code above or click it to register.

## Online Webinars

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### Fall Hazards (May)

**Date:** Monday, May 4, 2026

**Time:** 9 AM HST



*Scan the QR code above or click it to register.*

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### Trenching & Excavation Hazards (June)

**Date:** Monday, June 1, 2026

**Time:** 9 AM HST

**Announcement:** Event will be posted on the HIOSH website May 26, 2026.



*Scan the QR code above or click it to register.*

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### Electrical Hazards (July)

**Date:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026

**Time:** 9 AM HST

**Announcement:** Event will be posted on the HIOSH website on June 22, 2026.



*Scan the QR code above or click it to register.*

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# Stronger Together

## Join the HIOSH's Alliance



## Educate our local communities together

Community leaders helping their communities is what alliance is all about. As a HIOSH Alliance, you will:

- Connect with community peers
- Sharpen your safety skills
- Give back to your community



[labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/cooperative-programs/alliances/](https://labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh/cooperative-programs/alliances/)