

HAZARD ALERT

CPWR 
THE CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Suicide Prevention IN CONSTRUCTION



The Data

Suicide rates in the U.S. have increased in recent years, and it has been the 10th leading cause of death since 2008. In 2018¹ alone, there were:

- ▶ **48,344** deaths — **an average of 132 per day** or **1** every **11 minutes**.

Suicide can affect anyone. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), construction has one of the highest suicide rates compared to other industries.² There is no simple answer to why this increase has occurred, particularly among construction workers. However, there are steps that workers and employers can take to recognize the warning signs and help prevent suicides.

Sources: 1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group. <https://bit.ly/39A1816> AND Fatal Injury Data, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS). Accessed April 1, 2020. <https://bit.ly/2X0zYz2> 2) CDC. (2020). Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation — National Violent Death Reporting System, 32 States, 2016. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. <https://bit.ly/34ayx5p>

Recognize the Warning Signs

According to mental health professionals, the following are common warning signs that a person may be thinking about suicide¹:

Talking about wanting to die, guilt or shame, or being a burden to others.

Feeling:

- ▶ Empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live; extremely sad, anxious, agitated, or angry; unbearable emotional or physical pain.

Behavior:

- ▶ Planning or researching ways to die; buying a gun; withdrawing from friends, family, or activities; saying goodbye; giving away possessions; or making a will.
- ▶ Agitation or rage — increased conflict among co-workers²; extreme mood swings; changes in personality or neglecting their appearance.
- ▶ Taking dangerous risks, such as increased alcohol or drug use or driving recklessly; eating or sleeping more or less; increased tardiness and absenteeism from work².

Sources: 1) National Institute of Mental Health. Warning Signs of Suicide. <https://bit.ly/2X30Zz9>
2) Construction Financial Management Association. Face Suicide Warning Signs Before It's Too Late. <https://bit.ly/34151M>

**NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Find out more about construction hazards.

To receive copies of this Hazard Alert and cards on other topics

call **301-578-8500** or
email cpwr-r2p@cpwr.com

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Help Prevent Suicide...

1 Reach Out

If you notice the warning signs of suicide in someone you know, **talk to them – start a conversation**. Ask them about a specific warning sign you've noticed. For example, *"I've noticed lately that you are sitting alone at lunch and avoiding all of us while we're at work, and I am concerned."* You may feel uncomfortable, but the best way to find out if someone is having suicidal thoughts is to **ask them directly**, *"Are you thinking about suicide?"* Asking this will not put the idea into their head or make it more likely that they will attempt suicide.

If the answer is "Yes," do not leave them alone and get help.

Source: California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA). Know the Signs. <https://www.suicideispreventable.org>

2 Respond

When talking to someone who may be thinking about suicide, **take what they say seriously**. Listen without judgement, and express concern and support. **Be direct**. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide. Do not ask questions encouraging them to deny their feelings, such as: *"You're not thinking about suicide, are you?"* **Reassure** them that help is available.

DO NOT:

- ✗ **Tell the person to do it; debate the value of living or argue that suicide is right or wrong; minimize their problems** by saying things like *"You'll get over it," "Toughen up,"* or *"You're fine"*; **promise to keep their thoughts about suicide a secret.**

Source: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Help Someone Else. <https://bit.ly/2xagKPL>

3 Connect

Encourage the person to see a mental health professional. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for advice and referrals, or help them locate a treatment facility or program.

Stay in touch with them after a crisis to see how they are doing. Remind them:

- ▶ **YOU ARE NOT ALONE. THERE IS HOPE. SUICIDE IS NOT THE ANSWER.**

If someone is in immediate danger, call 911, take them to a nearby emergency room, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at 1-800-273-8255, or reach out to the Crisis Text Line by texting "HELLO" to 741741 to connect with a crisis counselor.

To Learn More About Preventing Suicides, Visit:

CPWR – Suicide Prevention
Resources:

<https://tinyurl.com/Suicide-Prevention>

Construction Industry Alliance for
Suicide Prevention:

<https://preventconstruction suicide.com/index.php>

American Foundation for Suicide

Prevention: <https://afsp.org/>



If You or Someone You Know Needs Immediate Help, Contact:

The National Suicide Prevention
Lifeline:

Provides free and confidential support from
trained counselors 24/7.

- ▶ Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

- ▶ Use the online Lifeline Chat at:
<https://bit.ly/2WGObnl>

Crisis Text Line:

Text "HELLO" to 741741 for free, 24/7
confidential support.