

## OSHA ALLIANCE SEEKS SAFER WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has announced the renewal of its alliance with the Roadway Work Zone Safety and Health Partners in an attempt to improve safety precautions for construction workers, whose work environment is particularly dangerous and workers face hazards of vehicular accidents frequently. The Roadway Work Zone Safety and Health Partners represents more than 1.2 million members across the U.S. and forge a link between the rights of the workers and the responsibilities of the employers. Reports reveal that on an average, two workers die every week on roadway work zones, and many more are injured. LIUNA General President Terence M. O'Sullivan said, "Highway work zones are among the most dangerous workplaces in the United States and 40 percent of workers killed or injured are Laborers. We must eliminate this tragic and unnecessary loss. That is why LIUNA is pleased to join other key partners in forming an Alliance with OSHA and NIOSH to enhance safety and health in road construction operations." OSHA Administrator Dr. David Michaels said, "Most fatalities that occur in road construction work zones involve a worker being struck by a piece of construction equipment or other vehicle. This renewed alliance with the Roadway Work Zone Safety and Health Partners will help reach workers and employers with critical education and information to reduce preventable injuries and deaths." The main goal of the alliance is to raise awareness amongst workers of OSHA's enforcement methods and to, together, develop and devise ways and means by which workers injuries can be prevented and reduced. Moreover, given that most workers in this industry are immigrants, their ability to speak and understand English is limited. The alliance aims to increase its outreach to non- or limited-English-speaking workers. The Alliance, for a period of two years, will develop fact-sheets, of what-to-do, how-to-do for paramedics, police officers, truck drivers. This will include high-visibility apparel and rules for entering and leaving work zones during the day and night. Separate work sheets are planned for less knowledgeable contractors. Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, it is imperative for employers to provide secure and healthy workplace environments for their workers. OSHA's role is to ensure that this rule is enforced and implemented. Brad Sant, ARTBA senior vice president for safety and education who had, ten years ago, pioneered an attempt to forge a similar alliance was happy to see it materialise. He said, "This alliance is unique among those administered by OSHA, in that it includes multiple federal agencies, organized labor, representation from state agencies and employer associations. It demonstrates an unparalleled commitment by the transportation construction sector to promote safety for our industry's workers. In an era marked by polarized politics, it is refreshing to see these very different groups come together and work so cooperatively to ensure our workplaces are safer for all involved." LIUNA General President Terence M. O'Sullivan was optimistic about the Alliance and said, "The Laborers have long been leaders in exposing the hazards of highway work and working to reduce and eliminate them. We must continue to find ways to improve safety and health in and around these workplaces. With the combined talents and networks of this Alliance, real progress is possible in the years ahead."