

Safety Break History

In 2003 Oregon OSHA created Safety Break for Oregon, the one-day event, at the urging of industry leaders concerned about an increase in workplace deaths in the state during 2002.

Oregon companies enjoyed a steady decrease in employee deaths for more than a decade, hitting a record low of 34 in 2001 before jumping to 77 in 2002.

Oregon OSHA attributes the 2002 increase to the state's lagging economy, which resulted in some companies laying off employees in safety-related positions. But members of the business community, including construction companies, were concerned there were other factors involved.

At the request of business leaders, Oregon OSHA agreed to help organize and promote a day dedicated to safety awareness, urging businesses and government agencies to spend at least a part of that day reminding employees about basic on-the-job safety.

Rather than create a single event for Safety Break for Oregon day, Oregon OSHA encourages companies to create their own programs, from simple 15-minute talks about general workplace safety to more elaborate ceremonies to recognize employees dedicated to job safety.