

**The National Campaign to Prevent Falls in
Construction Evaluation Report:
2020 Safety Stand-Down Based on
OSHA Certificate of Participation Data**



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Background:

Falls are the leading cause of fatalities in the construction industry. In 2019, lack of proper fall protection in construction remained the most frequently cited violation by OSHA for the eighth consecutive fiscal year.^{1,2} Concerningly, in 2019, construction fall fatalities to a lower level rose by 25% compared with 2018.³ There were 401 fatal falls to a lower level on construction sites in 2019.³

The National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction (Falls Campaign) is a response to this widespread occupational hazard. Founded by the [National Occupational Research Agenda \(NORA\)](#) [Construction Sector Council](#), the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#), the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#), and [CPWR–The Center for Construction Research and Training \(CPWR\)](#) in 2012, the Campaign is now entering its tenth year.

In 2014, as part of the Campaign, the organizing partners launched the week-long National Safety Stand-Down (Stand-Down). The Stand-Down prevents falls by bringing together employers, workers, and safety associations nationwide to pause work to engage in talks, demonstrations, trainings, and other activities to raise awareness of fall prevention every year.

The Stand-Down has a significant reach: stand-downs have been reported in all 50 states and internationally, and millions of workers have participated. For reports on previous years' Stand-Downs, see [Stop Construction Falls: Evaluation Efforts](#).

Methods:

All data were generated from OSHA's 2020 Certificate of Participation Database for the National Safety Stand-Down. Organizations seeking certificates to document their participation in the Stand-Down submitted information about their activities to the database.

There are several limitations to this dataset. All responses are self-reported and there is likely a selection bias. Based on anecdotal and experiential data, we are aware that a limited number of individuals and organizations take the step of obtaining a certificate, and therefore consider this analysis to be a sample of participants, and not an accurate count of total participants.

This report is a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the database. Duplicates were identified and removed. When different participants referred to the same organization with variations in spelling or grammar, responses were consolidated. Then, a descriptive quantitative analysis and a content qualitative analysis were performed using OSHA's Excel Database. Company information was kept anonymous and confidential.

¹ OSHA. (2020). The Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Standards FY 2019. <https://www.osha.gov/top10citedstandards>. (Accessed March 2021).

² From FY 2012-2019, Fall Protection 1926.501 was the most cited OSHA standard. In 2011, Scaffolding 1926.451 was the most frequently cited OSHA standard. 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2018 were confirmed via the [Way Back Machine's](#) internet archives of the OSHA webpage cited above. Archives were not available for FY 2012 and 2016. As such, FY 2012 was confirmed via the following source: Safety and Health Magazine. (2012). OSHA Announces 'Top 10' Violations of 2012. <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/safety-health-osha-announce-top-10-violations-of-2012-2>. (Accessed March 2021). FY 2016 was confirmed via the following source: Safety and Health Magazine. (2016). OSHA's Top 10 Most Cited Violations for 2016. <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/14927-2016-oshas-top-10-most-cited-violations>. (Accessed March 2021).

³ CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training. (2021). Fatal Injury Trends in the Construction Industry. <https://www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/DataBulletin-February-2021.pdf>. (Accessed March 2021).

Total Number of Stand-Downs and Workers Reached

The Stand-Down reached hundreds of thousands of workers in 2020 despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, organizations held **2,535 total stand-downs that reached 416,430 workers** in the United States and internationally. Although the number of stand-downs fell by 26% from 2019 (3,435 stand-downs), the number of workers reached fell by only 9% compared with 2019 (457,251 workers). As one company explained, “Although COVID is still a current problem, we were able to have a very effective stand-down.”

Extent of Ongoing Participation

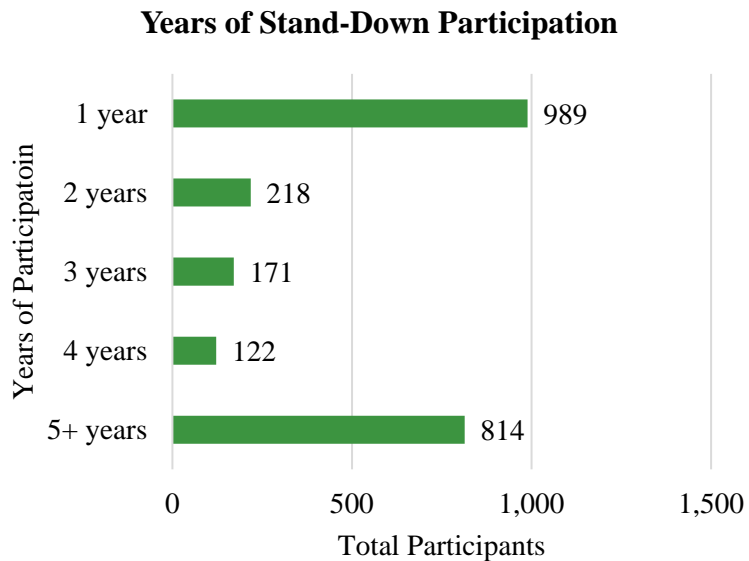
A. Multiple Stand-Downs

To assess how widespread participation was within companies, we analyzed how many organizations reported holding multiple stand-down events. Of the **2,535 stand-downs held, 56% (1,416) were reported by 284 organizations that had at least two separate events**. The **remaining 44% (1,119) of stand-downs were held by unique organizations** that each reported one event.

B. Multiple Stand-Downs Across Years

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, hundreds of organizations reported repeat Stand-Down participation, while many others joined it for the first time. A total of **814 participants returned for their fifth or greater stand-down in 2020**. In addition, although the event was in its seventh year, **39% (989 participants) joined the Stand-Down for the first time in 2020**.

Notably, residential construction companies – a long-term targeted end-user of the Falls Campaign – were more likely to be in their first year of participation than other types of organizations. Of companies that included information about how many years they had participated, **44% of residential construction organizations were first time participants compared with 39% of all industry categories**.

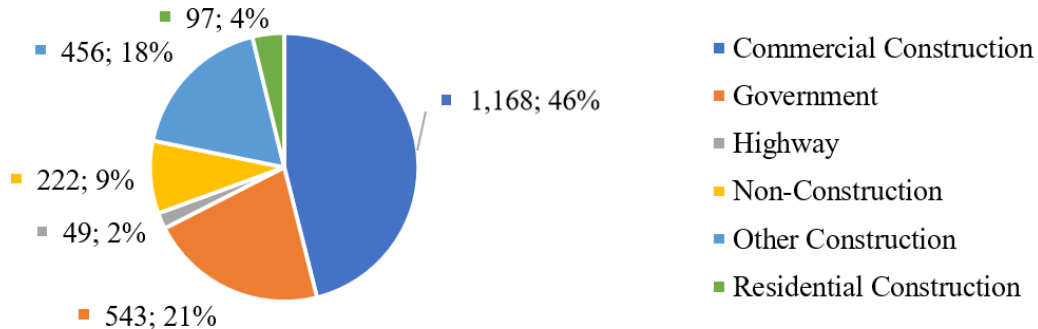


Stand-Down Demographics

A. Stand-Downs by Type of Construction

Respondents were provided a drop-down menu to classify their type of construction. An option was also included for non-construction companies. The most reported industry was **commercial construction, with 46% of the total stand-downs (1,168)**.

Stand-Down Responses by Type of Construction

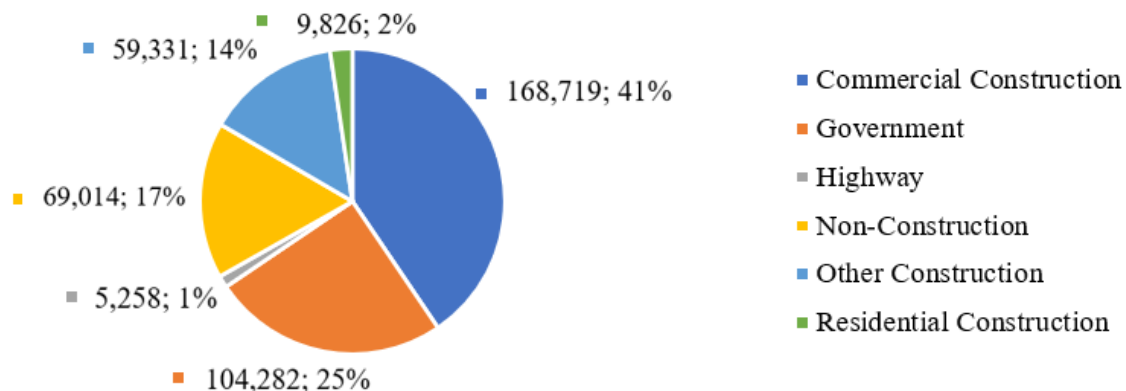


An original goal of the Falls Campaign was to reach out to small residential contractors. Historically, these contractors have been a difficult group to reach. In 2020, **residential construction organizations made up 4% of the stand-downs with a total of 97 stand-downs**. This was a decrease from 2019 in which residential construction companies made up 8% of the stand-downs and held 290 stand-downs. While we do not have data on the reason for this decline, we speculate that the pandemic may have had an impact on many smaller contractors' ability to hold events in several different ways (e.g., lack of time or resources to focus on other safety issues, pausing of work for an extended period, job loss).

B. Workers Reached by Type of Construction

Respondents were asked to report how many workers attended their stand-downs. Based on this information, we calculated how many workers were reached across all stand-downs within each industry. Again, commercial construction made up the largest share of workers reached: **41% of all workers reached worked in commercial construction (168,719)**.

Workers Reached by Type of Construction

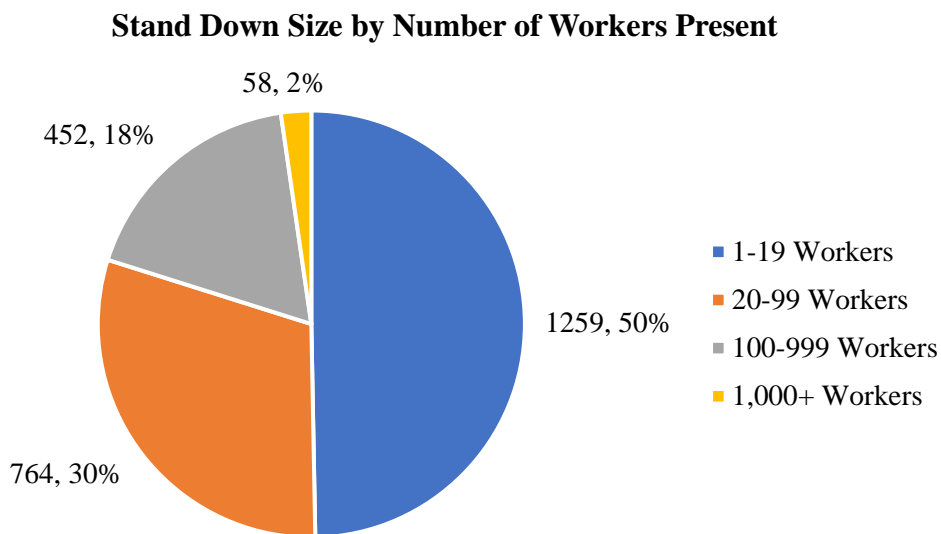


Residential construction workers were 2% of workers reached (9,826). Again, residential construction participation fell from 2019, in which 7% of workers reached were residential construction workers (30,807).

C. Stand-Down Size

A central goal of the Stand-Down is to reach small residential contractors and the workers they employ. Although we do not have a records of organization size, we do have information provided by respondents about how many workers were recorded at each stand-down event. This data represents a range of stand-down structures, including companies that have that number of workers as employees in total, companies that split their stand-down into smaller events and reported each small group as a separate stand-down, and contractors that included their subcontracted workers in their total count.

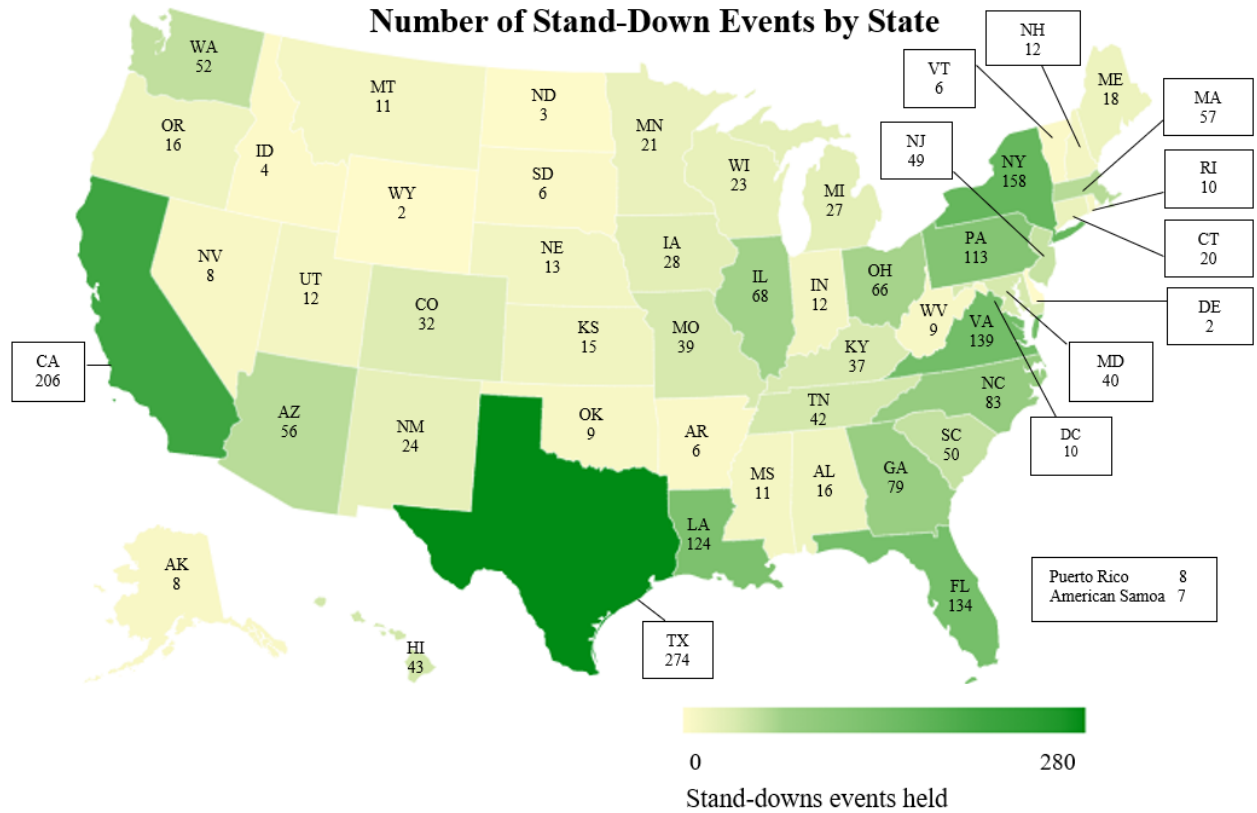
Fifty percent of all stand-downs were at sites with 1-19 workers present (1,259). This is an increase percentage wise from 2019, in which only 38% of stand-downs were at sites with 1-19 workers present (1,318). This trend towards smaller stand-downs may reflect organizations' social distancing precautions and pivots from gathering larger groups of employees at the same time. In addition, of the **97 stand-downs held in residential construction, 48% were at sites with 1-19 workers present** (47).



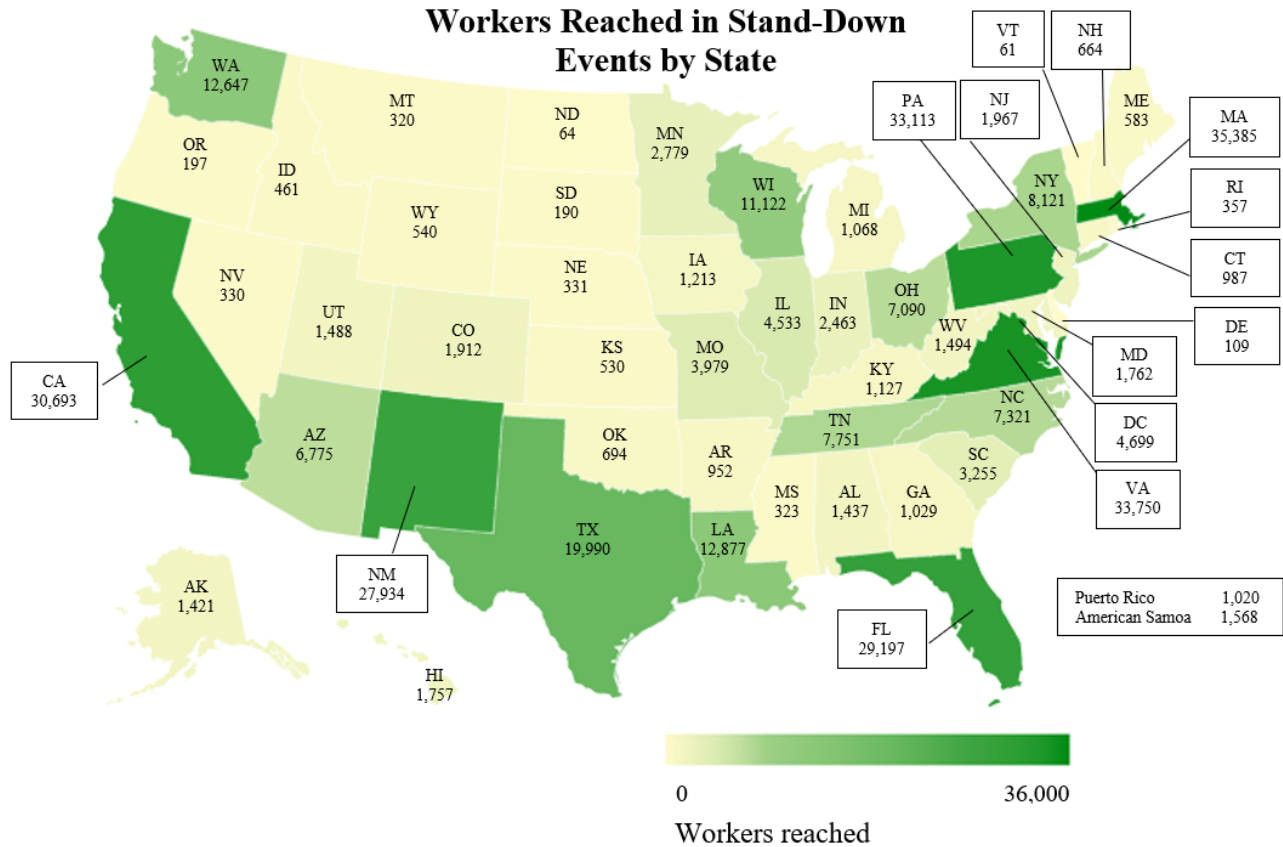
D. Workers Reached and Stand-Downs by State

In 2020, stand-downs took place in every state in the United States, along with seven in American Samoa and eight in Puerto Rico. There were also 217 international stand-downs reported with a total of 83,000 workers reached.

The states with the greatest number of stand-down events were **Texas (274)**, **California (206)**, **New York (158)**, **Virginia (139)**, **Florida (134)**, and **Louisiana (124)**.



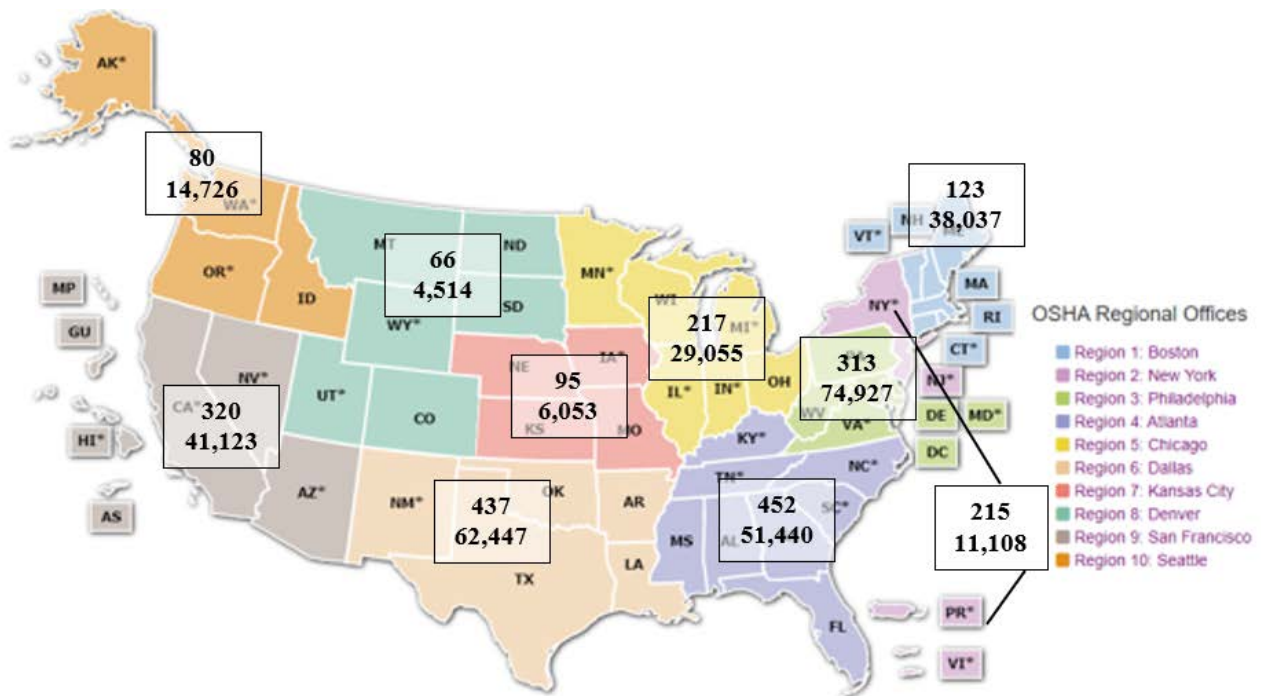
In total, 416,630 workers were reached through the Stand-Down. The six states with the greatest number of total workers reached were **Massachusetts** (35,385), **Virginia** (33,750), **Pennsylvania** (33,113), **California** (30,693), **Florida** (29,197), and **New Mexico** (27,934).



E. Stand-Downs and Workers Reached by OSHA Region

The OSHA regional offices and training centers are instrumental in increasing awareness of and participation in the Stand-Down. Analyzing the data by OSHA region, we found that in 2020, like 2019, Regions 4 (452) and 6 (437) held the highest number of stand-downs. However, when it comes to workers reached, Regions 3 (74,927) and 6 (62,447) had the highest totals.

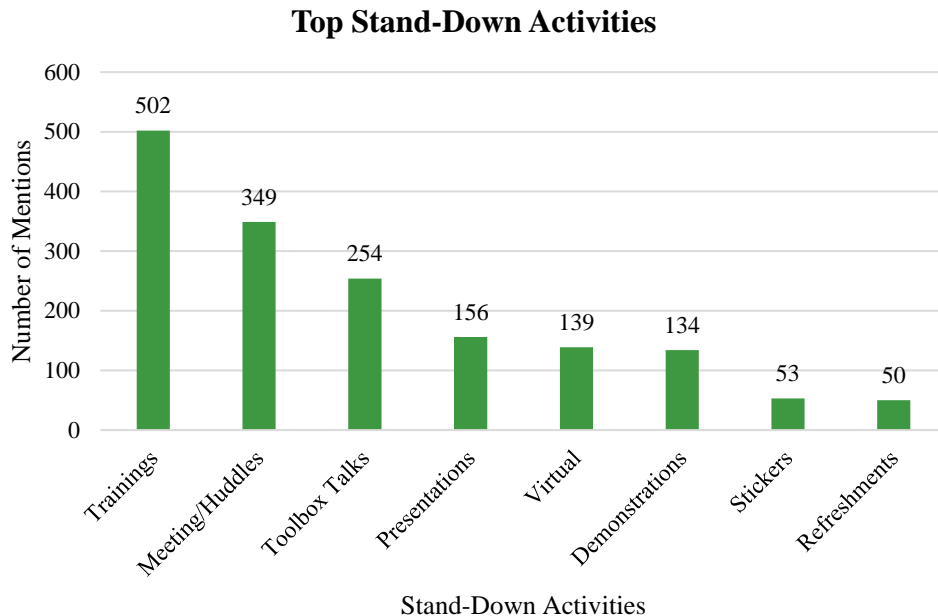
	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9	Region 10
Stand-Downs	123	215	313	452	217	437	95	66	320	80
Workers Reached	38,037	11,108	74,927	51,440	29,055	62,447	6,053	4,514	41,123	14,726



Activities Conducted

A. Popular Activities

Although the Certificate Database does not ask companies to state what activities they conducted during their stand-downs, many organizations described their events in the results and improvements sections. We counted the number of times popular activities were mentioned. The **most popular activities were trainings** (502), followed by **meetings and huddles** (349) and **toolbox talks** (254).



B. “It Will Be Easier Once the COVID-19 Crisis Has Passed” – Challenges for 2020 stand-downs:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, stand-downs were typically held in-person on job sites and, depending on the size of the organization, sometimes included large gatherings. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many companies created new policies limiting in-person gatherings to help protect their employees’ safety and health. In addition, many local authorities declared regulations restricting the size and location of in-person gatherings. These **necessary public safety measures presented barriers to organizing large group in-person stand-downs.**

An additional barrier to holding stand-downs in 2020 for some organizations was the **lack of availability of sufficient physical space for socially distanced in-person stand-downs.** Since social distancing requires physically spreading out, some companies reported not having enough space for in-person socially distanced stand-downs. As one company explained, “finding adequate space to social distance was challenging on some sites.”

The **change in date** for the Stand-Down created an additional challenge for some participants. The event was moved from May to September 2020 because of the pandemic. Although some organizations appreciated the event being moved to later in the year given the added complexities of operation earlier in 2020, others reported they “would have preferred more notice” about this change.

C. “We Were Forced to Get Creative” – Strategies for Successful 2020 stand-downs:

Organizations displayed flexibility and commitment as they held stand-downs while simultaneously promoting COVID-related safety practices. As one company explained, “The Safety Stand-Down this year was different than the last. We are doing all we can to support our training initiatives while remaining socially distanced to prevent the spread of COVID-19.”

Many organizations that held in-person events wrote that they practiced **social distancing** to reduce COVID risk. Social distancing, or physically maintaining at least six feet of distance between workers, was one way that companies sought to bring together workers in-person for stand-downs while reducing the risk of COVID transmission.

Organizations also prioritized **ventilation** to help reduce COVID risk. Many met outdoors: “Due to COVID-19, the meetings were conducted at each work site in outdoor conditions.” Some companies spread participants out across job sites, making use of outdoor areas such as parking lots. Others spread out indoors. As one company that met indoors reported, “We spaced everyone throughout the 6 floors of our building at open windows.”

In addition, some organizations **restructured past large events into smaller ones** to hold risk-reduced in-person events. As one company explained, “stand downs were held in smaller groups this year to keep up with social distancing requirements.” Companies split large groups of workers into smaller groups for discussion, demonstrations, and other activities as a strategy to limit large gatherings.

Finally, some organizations **moved their stand-downs online**. They used videos, virtual meetings, written e-resources, and other online tools to hold virtual stand-downs given the risks of gathering in-person. Although this approach was different than past years’ strategies, companies reported success with this modified structure. As one company explained, “Given current COVID climate, the ‘virtual’ safety week was still a successful event at our project sites.”

Are you interested in participating in the National Safety Stand-Down?

For resources on how to hold your event,
visit [One-Stop Stand-Down Shop | Stop Construction Falls](#)

2021 National Safety Stand-Down
May 3rd-7th, 2021



stopconstructionfalls.com

For more information on the National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction and the National Safety Stand-Down, visit the OSHA-NIOSH-CPWR campaign site: www.stopconstructionfalls.com