

September 14, 2026



INDUSTRY NEWS

Construction Suicide Prevention Week is Here! Take the Reins on Suicide Prevention/Mental Health Awareness

By Stephanie Ballew, AGC San Diego's New Safety Compliance Manager
(More on her below)

Imagine the construction industry as a high-rise project with scaffolding, cranes, and hard hats, but beneath the visible structure lies a darker undercurrent: mental health struggles among workers. While we often headline workplace accidents, the silent toll of suicide in construction surpasses even the deadliest injuries on site. The numbers tell a striking story.

**Approximate suicides in
2024:** 5,000 construction workers

Rate per 100,000 workers: 41.9

**Comparison to workplace
fatalities:** Only 982 fatal work
injuries occurred in 2023, a
fraction of the suicide deaths

**Construction employs ~7% of
the US workforce, but accounts
for nearly 18% of reported
suicide deaths among workers
with an industry code**

Visualize it: For every 100,000
construction workers, roughly 42
take their own lives, almost twice
the rate of working men overall.
These numbers illustrate that the
industry's most lethal hazard isn't
falling from scaffolding; it's
invisible, internal, and preventable
with proper support.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE:

The behaviors listed below may be some of the signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

TALKING ABOUT:

- ▷ Wanting to die
- ▷ Great guilt or shame
- ▷ Being a burden to others

FEELING:

- ▷ Empty, hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- ▷ Extremely sad, more anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- ▷ Unbearable emotional or physical pain

CHANGING BEHAVIOR, SUCH AS:

- ▷ Making a plan or researching ways to die
- ▷ Taking dangerous risks such as driving extremely fast
- ▷ Withdrawing from friends, saying goodbye, giving away important items, or making a will
- ▷ Displaying extreme mood swings
- ▷ Eating or sleeping more or less
- ▷ Using drugs or alcohol more often

**If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know,
get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new
or has increased recently.**

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Call or text 988
Chat at 988lifeline.org



www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

NIMH Identifier No. OM 25-4316

Risk Factors

Employment type and conditions: Seasonal, part-time, and subcontracted workers often lack access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), insurance, or mental health benefits.

Chronic pain and medication: About 34% report chronic pain, and 45% manage it with prescription meds; elevated opioid use is documented among injured workers.

Low awareness of available mental health resources: Even when benefits are offered, fewer than 30% understand the coverage.

This combination creates a precarious landscape: high physical demands, episodic employment, and limited access to support amplify mental health vulnerability.

Federal Response

Recognizing the crisis, lawmakers introduced the **Constructing the Path to Suicide Prevention Act**, aiming to study risk factors including access to benefits, organizational practices, and employment stressors, so that policies can better safeguard these workers. While it doesn't mandate changes, it establishes a research roadmap for actionable interventions.

Wrapping it Up with Perspective

Construction workers face a paradox: Highly visible, physically demanding work draws attention, yet the mental struggles happen in the shadows. While cranes may rise, safety harnesses protect bodies, but mental health scaffolding is still under construction. The statistics urge us to measure a job's true safety not just in accidents prevented, but in lives saved through mental health support, awareness, and compassion.

Engaging Fact

If you imagine a construction site with 100,000 workers, the number who died by suicide in a year is more than double those killed in all the on-the-job accidents combined. That startling contrast elevates mental health to the top of construction safety priorities.

This mix of figures, human context, and policy action creates a story that both informs and resonates because the true blueprint of safety must include the mind, not just the body.

AGC San Diego offers a certification in **Adult Mental Health First Aid**, and our **next class is THIS Thursday, September 17**. [Click here to register](#). Start prioritizing your firm's mental health today.

Learn more about [Construction Suicide Prevention Week here](#).

Putting Our Members First ... Introducing Stephanie Ballew, Our New Safety Compliance Manager!

By Becca Schaffer, Director of Workforce Development

AGC San Diego is pleased to welcome **Stephanie Ballew as our new Safety Compliance Manager**. Stephanie will serve as the primary point of contact for members seeking assistance with workplace safety and health, regulatory compliance, prevention strategies, training resources, and regional safety concerns.

Stephanie brings more than **20 years of occupational health and safety experience**, with extensive knowledge of federal OSHA construction standards, California Title 8 regulations, general industry requirements, and EM 385-1-1. Her career includes serving as a Safety Manager, Site Safety and Health Officer, trainer, and safety consultant on complex construction projects at Fort Irwin, NAWS China Lake, Miramar, March Air Reserve Base, and several other military and federal facilities. Throughout her career, Stephanie has developed safety and risk-management programs, conducted jobsite audits, reviewed safety plans and Activity Hazard Analyses, managed OSHA compliance, and delivered training to employees at every level of an organization.

Stephanie
Ballew

Safety
Compliance
Manager



She is already hitting the ground running by leading the development of a **new online Safety Services Resource Center** and will lead and support AGC San Diego's monthly Safety Committee meetings. Her practical, field-tested experience will help members navigate regulatory requirements, strengthen their safety programs, and protect the people who make their projects possible.

Exciting work is already underway. In the article above, Stephanie launches AGC San Diego's **Construction Suicide Prevention Week Initiative**, the first of many member-focused articles she will contribute. Members can also look forward to regular safety updates and resources in the Monday Morning Quarterback and our weekly Education and Safety emails. In addition, Stephanie will help guide safety training curriculum and coordinate programs that respond to evolving regulations and the changing needs of our members. Members can explore [AGC San Diego's safety training programs and upcoming classes here](#).

Be sure to tune in to the October 1 episode of the [Voice of Construction podcast](#), when Education and Safety will take center stage and share more about the exciting programs and resources on the horizon.

Fun Fact: *Stephanie is one of three; she is a triplet, and they were born on her mom's 33rd birthday.*

Is Your Company Doing Something Great in Safety?

We want to hear about it! Share your successes, innovative programs, employee achievements, and best practices with Stephanie at sballew@agcsd.org.

Introducing our New Meetings & Events Coordinator Emma Walker!

By Katie Hammock, Vice President of Operations

AGC Members, please give a warm welcome to our new **Meetings & Events Coordinator, Emma Walker!**

Emma
Walker

Meetings
& Events
Coordinator



Emma joins AGC San Diego as Meetings & Events Coordinator, bringing a background in marketing, communications, and project management. Originally from St. Paul, Minnesota, Emma recently relocated to San Diego after spending the past three years in Calabasas and is excited to support AGC members through engaging events, industry connections, and memorable experiences.

Prior to joining AGC, Emma worked in marketing roles where she developed and executed multi-channel campaigns across social media, email, web, and print collateral. Her experience includes coordinating projects, developing customer-facing communications, and

executing strategic initiatives that foster engagement and build strong professional relationships. Most recently, she worked for a stone and diamond tools supplier, leading marketing efforts that connected customers with products, resources, and industry events while expanding brand visibility.

Throughout her career, Emma has managed projects from concept through execution, combining creativity, organization, and attention to detail to deliver successful campaigns and initiatives. She is especially excited to combine her background in marketing with event planning, bringing a unique perspective on attendee engagement, communication, and the overall event experience. She looks forward to helping create opportunities that provide value for members, showcase industry partners, and strengthen AGC San Diego's construction community.

Emma holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management and Marketing from Carroll College in Helena, Montana, along with a Certificate in Entrepreneurship. She is currently pursuing certifications in Revenue Operations and Inbound Marketing Optimization to continue expanding her professional expertise.

During her time at Carroll College, Emma studied abroad and served as an Outdoor Program Leader, planning and leading backpacking and climbing trips for fellow students. Outside of work, she enjoys distance running and has completed three marathons and ten half marathons. The discipline, preparation, and perseverance required for endurance training reflect the same approach she brings to her work, and she looks forward to helping deliver outstanding experiences for AGC San Diego's members and events.

Come say hi to Emma at AGC's Lakeside headquarters or at one of our upcoming events!

Political Action at AGC San Diego: Meet With Us September 22!

By Dustin Steiner, Executive Vice President

We are officially 50 days away from the midterm elections! Your AGC **Political Action Committee** (PAC) has endorsed several candidates and been busy writing checks to support those who support us! As the campaigns ramp up and begin to hit the airwaves and your mailbox, I hope you will join us to make the next round of recommendations on

candidates and ballot measures.

Our next PAC meeting is approaching fast, and you won't want to miss it! [RSVP](#) required. Lunch will be provided.

In order to be as centrally located as possible, this meeting will again generously be hosted by AGC member Finch, Thornton & Baird, LLP.

AGC PAC Meeting

Offices of Finch, Thornton & Baird, LLP

4747 Executive Drive, San Diego

Tuesday, September 22, at Noon

Want to know where we are so far? [Check the voter guide below and online](#), which will be updated as the PAC and Board of Directors make additional recommendations heading into November.



AGC SAN DIEGO

November 3 - General Election

VOTER GUIDE

The Board of Directors of AGC San Diego is pleased to make the following recommendations.



CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Richard Bailey
San Diego City Council - District 2



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Rebecca Jones
County Supervisor - District 5



CALIFORNIA

Laurie Davies
State Assembly - 74th District



FEDERAL

Jim Desmond
US Congress - 48th District

ADDITIONAL LOCAL RACES



John McCann
Mayor of Chula Vista



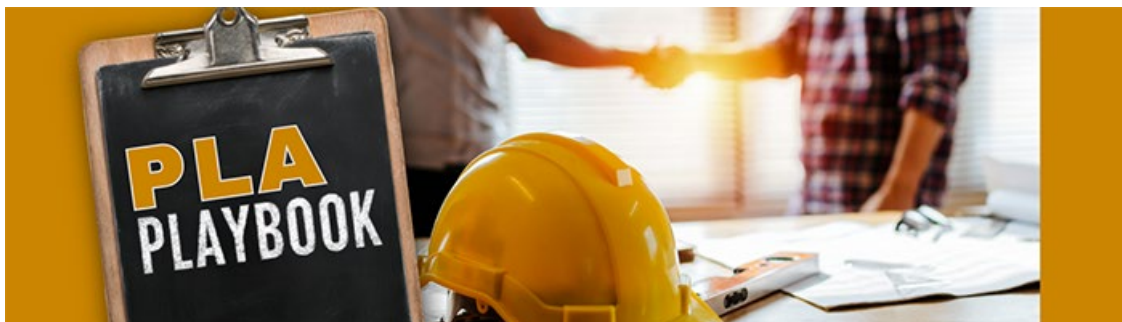
Dane White
Mayor of Escondido



Mike Sannella
Mayor of San Marcos



Lindsey Smith
San Marcos City Council - District 2



PLAs.... Friend, Foe, or Future Opportunity?

By Adrianna Lopez, Director of Labor Relations

When a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) project hits the street, contractors tend to fall into one of three camps: those who chase it, those who avoid it, and those who assume it's not

for them.

The problem? That assumption may be costing them opportunities.

PLAs, unfortunately, aren't going away. Across Southern California and beyond, they continue to shape how many public works projects are procured and performed. Yet despite their growing presence, many contractors still make decisions about PLA projects based on misunderstandings, assumptions, or outdated information rather than a clear understanding of how to succeed (and make money) on a PLA project.

For some contractors, the letters "PLA" immediately trigger concerns about workforce requirements, labor costs, hiring procedures, or administrative burdens. These concerns are legitimate, for sure.

For others, they represent access to large public projects they might not otherwise pursue. The truth is that a PLA is neither inherently a friend nor a foe. Like any contract, it's a set of rules, obligations, and opportunities that should be understood before deciding whether to bid.

Making Assumptions

One of the biggest mistakes contractors make is assuming that every PLA is the same.

They're not.

A PLA covering a City project differs significantly from one used by the Port Authority, school districts, SANDAG, or any other public entity. Requirements can vary, administrative procedures can differ, and provisions that impact your workforce, project planning, and costs may not be identical from one agency to the next. Understanding those differences is often what separates confident bidders from contractors sitting on the sidelines.

The good news?

PLA Playbook is written to help educate you on this very topic.

Once you understand the structure of an agreement, the key provisions, and the practical realities of compliance, you can evaluate projects based on facts rather than assumptions. That means making informed business decisions, identifying potential risks early, and determining whether a particular PLA project aligns with your company's goals, interests, and capabilities.

PLA Basics

Whether you're an estimator, project manager, executive, operations leader, or contractor looking to expand your public works opportunities, understanding PLAs is becoming an increasingly valuable tool in a contractor's belt.

My upcoming [PLA Fundamentals for Contractors](#) course will walk attendees through PLA basics and structure, key provisions that affect workforce planning and costs, differences among local agency agreements, common risk factors, and practical strategies for remaining competitive on PLA projects.

The goal is to provide enough education for you to confidently bid and work on a PLA project. And if, after learning the facts, you decide PLA work isn't the right fit for your company, you'll be able to make that decision with confidence, too.

Final Whistle

You may take this course and decide that PLA work isn't for your company. You may decide it's your next growth opportunity. Either way, you'll be making that decision with your eyes wide open.

Because "That's not for us" can sometimes be an expensive assumption.



THE VOICE OF CONSTRUCTION

<https://www.agcsd.org/podcast>

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Listen Now - New episodes drop every other Thursday!

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UPCOMING *Mark Your Calendars* **EVENTS**



October 1 - 30 - AGC Thanksgiving Food Drive - [Download flyer](#)

October 5 - [AGC Fall Golf](#) - Country Club of Rancho Bernardo

October 15 - [AGC Fall Festival & Car Show](#) - AGC SD HQ in Lakeside

November 3 - [Get to Know AGCSD Luncheon](#) - AGC SD HQ in Lakeside

December 12 - [Christmas in Coronado](#) - Hotel Del Coronado *[*Book your stay here*](#)*

COMMITTEE / COUNCIL MEETINGS

September 2026

September 18 - 7:30 AM - **Caltrans/SANDAG Liaison** @ Caltrans office - **NEW DATE**

September 24 - 11:30 AM - **Specialty Council** - Lakeside

September 29 - NOON - **SDGE Liaison** - Lakeside

October 2026

October 7 - 7:00 AM - **Safety Committee** - Lakeside

October 13 - NOON - **Meetings & Events** - Lakeside

October 21 - 11:30 AM - **Port District Liaison** @ Port office

October 22 - 11:30 AM - **Airport Liaison** @ Airport Design & Construction office

October 29 - 11:30 AM - **H.R. Practices Committee** - Lakeside

Committee Meeting
Calendar

Get Involved - Join a
Committee

EDUCATION / SAFETY TRAINING

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Classes are held at our **San Diego** location in Sorrento Valley/Miramar; our AGC Headquarters in **Lakeside**; or **virtually**.

Safety Training

September 16: CPR/First Aid and AED Certification (San Diego)

September 17: Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Certification (Lakeside)

September 17: Scaffold Competent Person Training

September 17: Project Engineer Bootcamp

Sept. 21-23: EM 385-1-1 40-Hour Safety and Occupational Health Requirements

Sept. 21-25: Fall Protection 24-Hour Competent Person for EM385-1-1 & Rescue Training

Sept. 28 - Oct. 1: OSHA 30-Hour Construction Outreach



Compliance Training & Professional Development

September 15: Prevailing Wage Basics (Virtual)

Sept. 15: Lunch & Learn Construction Law: Scheduling Impact Claims (Lakeside)

September 18: PLA Fundamentals for Contractors (Lakeside)

Technology

September 15: QuickBooks Intermediate/Advanced (Desktop Version) (San Diego)

September 17: Excel Advanced Training (San Diego)

September 21: Microsoft Word Intermediate (San Diego)

September 22: AI in Construction (Virtual)

September 22: Microsoft Project Professional: Beginning-Intermediate (San Diego)

September 24: Introduction to AI for Microsoft Excel (San Diego)

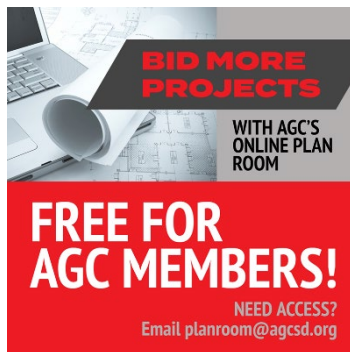
September 24: BLUEBEAM REVU Takeoffs & Estimation (Hybrid/San Diego)

[Download September Training Schedule PDF](#)

[TRAINING CALENDAR](#)

[VIEW TRAINING CATALOG](#)

PLAN ROOM



FIND US



AGC East County Headquarters & Apprenticeship Training Center
10140 Riverford Road
Lakeside, CA 92040
(858) 558-7444
[DIRECTIONS](#)



AGC Education & Safety Training Center
6212 Ferris Square
San Diego, CA 92121
2nd floor
[DIRECTIONS](#)

About Monday Morning Quarterback

AGC San Diego Chapter's Monday Morning Quarterback is a "hot off the press" and to the point Monday morning briefing on the important issues facing San Diego's construction industry. It is prepared by AGC Chief Executive Officer, Eddie Sprecco, and Vice President Government & Industry Relations, Dustin Steiner.

Please contact [Eddie Sprecco](#) or [Dustin Steiner](#) with your comments, or with information that should be conveyed to the industry through this service. Well over 3,000 individuals employed by AGC member firms are part of this system.

Disclaimer: Information and advice provided by AGC San Diego staff is general and not a substitute for legal counsel. Before applying any recommendations or policies to your business, consult a licensed attorney familiar with your specific circumstances.

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