



NCDOL

N.C. Department of Labor

Josh Dobson, Commissioner

Labor

LEDGER

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New Safety Awards Coordinator Brings New Face to Program

By Natalie Bouchard, Public Information Officer

With the retirement of beloved Safety Awards Coordinator Eursula Joyner, Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson appointed Meredith Watson to take over the position. As safety awards program coordinator, Watson will be responsible for promoting the Safety Awards Program, scheduling safety awards banquets, and coordinating efforts between the department, local sponsors and local entities that qualify as award recipients.

“It is very important to me that we make the transition to a new coordinator as seamless as possible and I’m confident that Meredith is the right choice to make that happen,” Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson said. “We really value all participants including the chambers of commerce, the Safety and Health Council of North Carolina, and all other sponsors who have supported this program over the years. Meredith will do a great job building upon what Eursula and former Labor Commissioner Cherie Berry built together and continuing the tradition of presenting thousands of awards across the state.”

The Safety Awards Program is administered by the NCDOL Education, Training and Technical Assistance (ETTA) Bureau, which falls under the Occupational Safety and Health Division. The program is one of the department’s many recognition programs that aims to promote and recognize employers and employees for excellence in workplace safety and health.

“Meredith has embraced her new role as the safety awards coordinator,” said LaMont Smith, recognition program manager for ETTA. “Currently, she is reviewing and processing applications in preparation for the 2021 safety awards banquet season. My team and I look forward to working with Meredith as she continues to evolve in her position as safety awards coordinator.”

Watson hails from High Point and attended college at East Carolina University, where she double majored in political science and security studies. In her time at ECU she was president of several organizations, completed two congressional internships on Capitol Hill, and was passionate about working on campaigns at every level, which is how she met Commissioner Dobson.

Both of Watson’s parents’ careers have provided a strong example of public service and workplace safety and health. While her mom is a teacher at David-son-Davie Community College, where she teaches in the Health Information Technology Program, Watson’s dad is an industrial hygienist and the head of Workplace Hygiene Inc., a private industrial hygiene business.

“The Safety Awards Program is such a great way for people all over the state to be recognized for their hard work and dedication to workplace safety,” Watson said. “Everyone should feel the same level of satisfaction and recognition, whether it is their first year getting an award, or their 30th consecutive year. Women and men all over North Carolina dedicate their careers to ensuring their workplace is a safe and healthy environment for their employees and I am honored I get to play a part in giving them the recognition they deserve.”

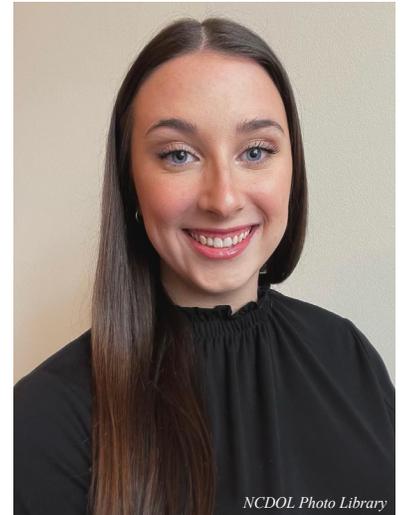
The Safety Awards Program recognizes private and public firms throughout the state that achieve and maintain good safety records. The program is designed to stimulate interest in accident prevention and to promote safety in the workplace by providing an incentive to employers and employees to maintain safe and healthful workplaces.

In operation since 1946, the program now extends to more than 5,000 firms, and about 3,000 awards are presented annually. Two types of awards are administered through the program: annual Safety Awards and Million-Hour Awards.

Each year, there are banquets held to celebrate the recipients of safety awards across the state. Due to COVID-19, last year’s banquets were held virtually. Hopefully this year, with the emergence of a vaccine and cases starting to fall, safety awards banquets will be held in person, but at a later date than usual. A schedule for the banquets should be released in April.

“Following in the footsteps of someone that was as wonderful to this program and did so much for it as Eursula did, let’s just say I have my work cut out for me,” Watson said. “However, I would like to continue to grow and expand this program like she has done over the years. I would like to see a noticeable increase every year, not only in applications we receive but in the number of applicants that are approved for an award.”

For questions about the Safety Awards Program, visit our [website](http://www.labor.nc.gov), call 919-707-7855 or email Meredith Watson, safety awards coordinator, at safety.awards@labor.nc.gov.



NCDOL Photo Library

As the latest appointee by Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson, new Safety Awards Coordinator Meredith Watson looks forward to growing and building upon her predecessor’s great work.



From Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson

It is hard to believe that three months have already passed in my new position as labor commissioner – time flies! I am so encouraged by all that I’ve learned from our department staff, as well as the many meetings and conversations I’ve had with industry leaders and workers. I am excited to update you on the many activities going on inside the department and around the state.

We are quickly moving into the spring season, which is usually the time of year for our annual safety awards banquets. You may know that we are delaying the normal spring schedule in hopes of returning to in-person banquets later this year. While we wait patiently for that time, I am happy to introduce Meredith Watson, our new safety awards coordinator. Meredith has taken the reigns from Eursula Joyner who is enjoying a well-deserved retirement. You can learn more about Meredith on Page 1.

Speaking of safety awards, I am pleased that the department recently recognized the Mooresville Police Department as our newest Public Sector SHARP participant. The Police Department joins several Town of Mooresville departments that have already achieved this designation. Read more about the Police Department’s achievement and the SHARP program on Page 3.

In addition to overseeing the SHARP designation, our Consultative Services Bureau is well known for offering consultative safety and health visits to small and mid-sized businesses. As an example of creative thinking during the pandemic, the bureau now offers virtual visits for employers across the state. Read about the virtual visits on Page 3.

We’ve all been navigating the challenges presented by COVID-19 over the past year, but the availability of COVID-19 vaccines allows us to see the light at the end of the tunnel. **I was able to receive my vaccine on March 19 in Lenoir at a vaccination event coordinated by Caldwell UNC Health Care and the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.** This event allowed frontline essential employees of several Caldwell County businesses to receive their vaccine. I continue to encourage all North Carolinians to schedule an appointment for the vaccine as soon as they are eligible.

As more and more of our fellow citizens receive the vaccine, our lives will become a little more “normal.” And in that return, one thing I look forward to is getting out into our communities, visiting your workplaces and participating, in-person, with all of our traditional department events that celebrate businesses and workers across our state. See you soon!

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Recognition Roundup

“Recognition Roundup” identifies businesses that qualify for one of the N.C. Department of Labor’s recognition programs. Congratulations to all of the recent award recipients. For a complete list of **Star** and **SHARP** sites, visit the NCDOL [website](#).

Carolina Star *Recertification

- Pentair Aquatics Pool and Spa, *Sanford**
- WestRock, Conover Folding, *Conover**

SHARP *Recertification

- Cozy Home Custom Cabinets Inc. dba Cozy Kitchens, *Kitty Hawk**
- UMRH Inc. dba Cypress Glen Retirement Community, *Greenville**
- Sonoco Recycling Inc., *Greensboro**
- Cross Road Retirement Community, *Asheboro**
- Harris Rebar North Carolina Inc., *Lumberton**
- Joseph T. Ryerson & Son Inc., *Charlotte**
- ECMD Inc. dba ECMD Distribution, *Elkin**
- ECMD Inc., *Wilkesboro**
- ECMD Inc. dba East Coast Moulding, *Wilkesboro**
- Automated Solutions LLC, *Sawmills**
- Crown Equipment Corporation, *Kinston**
- Foothills Industries of McDowell County Inc., *Marion**
- Cape Fear Public Utility Authority EMD, *Wilmington*
- Cape Fear Public Utility Authority Administrative Services, *Wilmington**
- C&H Tooling Inc., *Candler**
- Olympic Products LLC, *Greensboro**
- Milkco Inc., *Asheville**
- Town of Mooresville Police Department, *Mooresville*



Josh Dobson
Commissioner of Labor

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Town of Mooresville Police Department Earns SHARP Recognition

By Natalie Bouchard, Public Information Officer

NCDOL recently presented a Public Sector SHARP award to the Town of Mooresville Police Department on Wednesday, March 10. SHARP stands for Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program and is a safety and health recognition program administered by the OSH Division's Consultative Services Bureau (CSB). The program recognizes smaller employers throughout the state that have established, implemented and maintained exceptional workplace safety standards.

There are three other SHARP categories in addition to the Public Sector SHARP that include General Industry, Construction and Logging. Participation in the Public Sector SHARP is limited to specific departments in a municipality that usually have higher rates of injuries and illnesses such as sheriff and police departments, fire and EMS, public utilities, parks and recreation departments, school maintenance, and public works. As of March 15, 2021, 44 public sector sites have obtained the SHARP designation from NCDOL.

"We are so grateful to have some of the state's best employers participate in SHARP," said Kevin O'Barr, consultative services bureau chief. "They provide deserved recognition for their employees and provide them a safe and healthful place to work."

To qualify for SHARP, the Town of Mooresville Police Department participated in both safety and health full-service visits with CSB safety and health consultants. Additionally, the police department's OSHA recordable rates, known as TRC and DART, were below the industry average, which is a requirement to qualify for the SHARP designation.

"The Town of Mooresville Police Department is the latest public sector entity eligible for inclusion in SHARP," said Nelson Edwards, safety and industrial hygiene supervisor for the Consultative Services Bureau. "This includes all of Mooresville Public Utilities, Public Works, Parks and Recreation and now Police. Mooresville Fire Department is currently a Carolina STAR site, so all of their eligible departments are now participants in either SHARP or Carolina Star. Congratulations on this wonderful accomplishment."

The Consultative Services Bureau can assist your business in working toward this prestigious recognition. Employers interested in learning more about the program may contact Kevin O'Barr at 919-707-7840 or kevin.obarr@labor.nc.gov. They can also visit the NCDOL [website](#) to submit a request form electronically.



From left to right: Chris Russel, risk and safety manager; Ron Campurciani, police chief; and Michelle Mann, risk and safety officer, pose for a photo with the SHARP flag on Wednesday, March 10, in Mooresville.

NCDOL Provides Virtual Consultation for Small Businesses During Pandemic

By Dolores Quesenberry, Public Information Officer

With the help of virtual technology during the COVID-19 pandemic, NCDOL's Consultative Services Bureau continued providing its free safety and health consultative visits to small- and medium-sized businesses throughout the state.

"While the pandemic may be limiting our ability to go on-site to provide services, we are open and ready to help your business," said Kevin O'Barr, bureau chief for the Consultative Services Bureau. "We have been able to provide about 400 virtual visits for employers across the state during the pandemic. Even though we were not able to go on-site, we are able to provide free assistance to employers using video conferencing and other technology."

While these virtual visits cannot replace on-site consultation, they have provided a way for the bureau to continue its mission of:

- Helping small businesses identify and eliminate workplace hazards.
- Providing advice on complying with OSHA standards.
- Training and educating workers.
- Helping employers establish and improve written safety and health programs.

"We have received good feedback on this option and plan to continue to offer it during 2021," O'Barr said. "After the initial relationship is established, every employer can maintain an on-going relationship with the program. Then, when it is safe to return in person, consultants can conduct a thorough walk-through of the facility and can provide sampling for air contaminants, noise and other hazards on-site."

The consultation program offers no-cost and confidential occupational safety and health services for small and medium-sized business. The consultation program is separate from the Occupational Safety and Health Division's compliance bureaus and its safety and health consultants do not issue citations or penalties.

The Consultative Services Bureau has consultants located throughout the state who are available to help you create a safer work environment. To find out more information about what services are available or to learn about how to initiate the process, please call the Consultative Services Bureau at 919-707-7846 or visit the NCDOL [website](#).

Employers Urged to Support COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

By Tracy Zimmerman, Senior Director of External Affairs, NCDHHS

Tested, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines will help us beat this pandemic and get back in control of our lives. As more workers become eligible for vaccines, North Carolina employers have an important role to play to help their employees have the information they need to take their shot when it's their spot.

Research conducted by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) shows that the vast majority of North Carolinians will get a COVID-19 vaccine once their questions about safety, effectiveness and possible side effects are answered. You can help make sure your workers know:

The vaccines help prevent COVID-19 and are effective in preventing hospitalization and death from the virus. Millions of people in the U.S. have already received them.

- ◆ Scientists had a head start. COVID-19 vaccines are built on years of work to develop vaccines for similar viruses.
- ◆ You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccines. You may have temporary reactions like a sore arm, fever, headache or feeling tired and achy for a day or two after receiving the vaccine.
- ◆ NCDHHS has created a suite of bilingual materials that can be found at www.YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov to help you spread the word.
- ◆ The video library features workers from a variety of industries and community leaders around the state talking about the importance of taking the COVID-19 shot. Share them in meetings and through your employee outreach channels.
- ◆ Flyers provide information about safety and effectiveness and who is eligible for vaccines. Post them in breakrooms and other employee spaces.
- ◆ Social media content answers common questions. Post on your social media channels.
- ◆ Website and newsletter graphics, postcards, FAQs and a presentation are also available.
- ◆ Materials are frequently updated, so visit YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov and vacunate.nc.gov (Spanish language) regularly.

Employers can also send employees directly to YourSpotYourshot.nc.gov, where they can find all the information and resources they need. Once on the site, employees can use **Find My Vaccine Group** to see if they are eligible for vaccination. **Find a Vaccine Location** helps them find a nearby provider.

Some employers have planned and promoted workplace vaccination events by working with their local vaccine providers. If you are interested in coordinating with a vaccine provider, you can find information about providers near you at MySpot.nc.gov. For large employers with 300 or more employees interested in vaccination, contact your local employer liaison through the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina to get added to a waitlist for doses from local providers. You can find contact information for employer liaisons on their [website](#).

While vaccine supply is improving, demand still exceeds supply. Therefore, states have to vaccinate people in groups. People currently eligible for vaccination include health care workers, long-term care staff and residents, anyone 65 and older, frontline essential workers, and people with medical conditions that put them at greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19. Frontline essential workers are those working in critical manufacturing, education, essential goods, food and agriculture, government and community services, health care and public health, public safety, and transportation. All North Carolinians will become eligible on April 7.

Visit YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov and use the DHHS resources to promote COVID-19 vaccination. Employers are invited to co-brand any DHHS materials shared with their employees.

The best way we can end the pandemic and save lives is to get as many people as possible vaccinated as quickly as possible. To slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, continue to practice the 3 W's - wear a mask, wait 6 feet apart and wash your hands until most people have a spot to take their shot.

NCDOL is proud to partner with NCDHHS to promote the COVID-19 vaccine.



Courtesy of NCDHHS
Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson receives his COVID-19 vaccine on March 19 in Lenoir. [See the video here.](#)

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By Harriet Hopkins, Administrator
Retaliatory Employment
Discrimination Bureau

Q: I share a small office in a warehouse facility with another secretary who recently tested positive for COVID-19. I told my boss that I thought I should leave and quarantine at home for 10 days. He refused and said that I could quarantine right in the office since there was no one else who worked in that space. I said that I didn't think that was right and was concerned that I might be carrying the virus too and could expose others. He insisted that he was following the governor's executive orders and CDC guidelines. I told him I was going to call the NCDOL helpline and find out what I should do. He fired me on the spot. Can he do that?

A: You have the right to ask about safety concerns at the workplace. You have the right to call the NCDOL helpline to seek guidance or file a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Division. Your employer does not have the right to fire you because you call or say that you are going to file a workplace safety complaint with the OSH Division. If your employer fired you because of your threat to call the OSH Division, you may have a valid claim under the N.C. Retaliatory Employment Discrimination Act (REDA). You can call the NCDOL helpline, 1-800-NC-LABOR, for more information.

Inside NC Labor



Due to social distancing protocol, recent podcasts have been recorded over the phone. Be sure to check out NCDOL's podcast, **Inside NC Labor**.
Episode 40 features newly elected Labor Commissioner Josh Dobson as he discusses his background, public service and his goals for NCDOL.
Episode 41 features Dr. Mandy Cohen, N.C. Department of Health and Human Services secretary, and Labor Commissioner Dobson as they discuss the vaccine rollout process, how to find your spot, take your shot and other pertinent information concerning COVID-19 vaccines.
In addition to NCDOL's website, **Inside NC Labor** is available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Anchor and Google Podcasts.
Inside NC Labor is designed to inform and educate North Carolina citizens on the role that the Department of Labor plays in state government.



Courtesy of NCDHHS



COVID-19 Guidance

Please check the NCDOL website for guidance regarding COVID-19.

The information is updated based on CDC guidelines.



SAFETY AWARDS Season Coming Soon!

DEADLY Mistakes



By Judyth Forte, State Plan Coordinator

Fatal Event: A 32-year-old man died from injuries sustained from a 26-foot fall to a concrete sidewalk from a stepladder platform scaffold, that was located on top of a second-floor balcony.

Investigative Findings: Renovations were being made to an existing three-story quadraplex residence by a carpentry contractor. The second and third story balconies that were attached to the structure were going to be removed and then rebuilt using the original vertical supports of the second-floor balcony.

The third-floor balcony deck had been removed and two carpenters were working from the second-floor balcony removing scrap, nails, and bolts from the remains of the third-floor balcony where it was attached to the structure. They were using claw hammers and flat pry bars. To reach the third-floor work area, they set up a step ladder platform scaffold on the second-floor balcony about 2 to 3 feet away from the unprotected edge. It consisted of two 8-foot-tall heavy-duty model fiberglass step ladders, on which they placed a 16-foot-long by 14-inch-wide aluminum plank scaffold platform on the third rung of the ladder. The platform was 39 inches above the balcony floor and the balcony was 13 feet above the concrete sidewalk. The second-floor balcony guardrails had been removed and no other protective measures were installed. As the two employees worked from the platform, one of the employees heard a scream. As he turned in the direction of the sound, he saw that the other employee had fallen from the platform and over the side of the balcony.

Discussion: The nature of the work being done caused the employee to pull down and away from the structure with the tools. A slip or sudden release of the tool or material could result in an employee losing their balance or stepping back away from the structure and off the platform.

Fall hazards are foreseeable. Employers can identify them during a hazard assessment, eliminate them, eliminate exposure to them, or control them before they result in injuries or death.

The carpentry contractor failed to require the use of fall protection when employees were working from unprotected balconies. There was fall protection at the site, but the company owner did not require its use by the employees and did not use it himself.

The employer did not provide fall hazard training for each potentially exposed employee to enable them to recognize fall hazards and the procedures to be followed in order to eliminate hazards. In addition, no scaffolding training had occurred, and no health and safety program was implemented on the site.

The employer had the responsibility to ensure that employees were protected from falls while working at elevated heights of 6 feet or more on a residential structure and to establish and maintain programs which provided for frequent and regular inspections of the jobsite by a “competent person” so hazards could be identified and corrected. OSHA defines a competent person as “one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous or dangerous to employees and who has the authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.”

Recommendations:

- ✘ Each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems or personal fall arrest systems.
- ✘ A construction employer must have a health and safety program in place and provide fall hazard training for each potentially exposed employee to enable them to recognize fall hazards and the procedures to be followed in order to provide adequate protection for employees that could be exposed to the hazards.
- ✘ A competent person is required to conduct regular jobsite inspections to identify hazards, inspect rigging equipment, oversee scaffold erection, inspect scaffolding and inspect fall protection systems.
- ✘ Employees need to be supervised and corrected, if necessary, to ensure fall protection equipment is used effectively and appropriately.

WORKPLACE WORRIES



By Kisha Holmes, Administrator, Wage and Hour Bureau

Q: I have a 16-year-old student who would like to work for my business as a cashier. Am I required to have the youth obtain a youth employment certificate?

A: Youth employment certificates are required for youth under the age of 18. A new youth employment certificate must be obtained for each new employer. The certificate must be signed by the youth, the parent and the employer prior to the first day of work. Employers are responsible for maintaining a copy of the certificate for a period of three years from the date of separation. To obtain a youth employment certificate, please visit our [website](#). All youth employment certificates are issued electronically.



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Bulletin Board

Mine and Quarry Training

Part 48 New Miner Training
April 5-7, *Virtual*

Part 48 Annual Refresher Training
April 8, *Virtual*

MSHA New Miner Training
April 19-21, *Spruce Pine*
May 3, *Marion*

MSHA Annual Refresher Training
April 22, *Spruce Pine*
May 6, *Marion*

To register for any of these classes,
call the Mine and Quarry Bureau at 919-707-7932.

OSH Webinar Courses

Visit the **OSH Training Schedule Calendar** to view upcoming internet training and other safety courses. Among the courses being offered include:

- ◆ Heat Stress
- ◆ Stairways and Ladders
- ◆ Fall Protection (English and Spanish)
- ◆ Scaffolds
- ◆ Steel Erection

Pre-Recorded Webinars

Visit the **OSH Training Schedule Calendar** to view upcoming internet training and other safety courses.

- ◆ Bloodborne Pathogens
- ◆ Ergonomic Awareness
- ◆ Fall Protection
- ◆ Hazard Communication
- ◆ Health Hazards SEP
- ◆ Heat Stress
- ◆ Inspection Process
- ◆ Lockout/Tagout
- ◆ Machine Guarding
- ◆ Confined Space (Construction and General Industry)
- ◆ Occupational Noise Exposure
- ◆ Powered Industrial Trucks
- ◆ Recordkeeping
- ◆ Respirable Crystalline Silica
- ◆ Respiratory Protection
- ◆ Scaffolds
- ◆ Stairways and Ladders
- ◆ Toxic Hazardous Substances
- ◆ Walking Working Surfaces

Wage and Hour Presentations

Investigators from the Wage and Hour Bureau offer presentations to employers, employees, high schools and career development organizations. The presentation covers the provisions of the Wage and Hour Act, minimum wage, overtime, record keeping, wage payment and youth employment. The presentation is designed to enhance North Carolina citizens' knowledge of labor laws and to inform employers and employees of their rights and responsibilities in wage and hour matters.

To schedule a presentation, please email whbinfo@labor.nc.gov with the following information: requesting individual or business, location, desired topics, and preferred dates for presentation.

COVID-19 Guidelines

Please check the NCDOL website for guidance regarding COVID-19. The information is updated based on CDC guidelines.

www.labor.nc.gov

COVID-19 Related Pre-Recorded Webinars

- N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirator COVID-19
- Personal Protective Equipment in Construction Industry COVID-19
- Personal Protective Equipment in General Industry COVID-19
- Respiratory Protection COVID-19

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Nova Development