



Construction Health and Safety Excellence Minnesota

A partnering program of the
Associated General Contractors of Minnesota

and the

Occupational Safety and Health Division
of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

AGC of Minnesota and Minnesota OSHA's Partnership Program

1. Purpose:

CHASE stands for Construction Health and Safety Excellence. The purpose of this partnership is to improve the safety and health of the working environment in the construction industry, reducing serious injuries, illnesses and fatalities through collaboration, mentorship, education, and implementation of best practices that go above and beyond industry standards. This partnership is for Contractors that value safety and want to strive for improvement throughout the industry with best practices.

This program began in October 2002, when the Associated General Contractors of Minnesota (AGC of MN) and Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) met to discuss a partnership charter that mutually recognizes the importance of providing a safe and healthful work environment in the construction industry, in addition to formalizing a long-standing relationship between the two organizations. To advance a mutual goal, they strongly agreed on the need to develop a working relationship that creates mutual trust and respect for the respective roles of each organization in the construction safety process. It was agreed that the Construction Health and Safety Excellence (CHASE) Minnesota partnership agreement would be the basis for this agreement. This partnership agreement has been negotiated between MNOSHA and AGC of MN, owners, association members and labor to revise this partnership in August 2012, and June of 2026.

1.1 Partnership Goals:

1. To support & recognize those contractors where managers and employees work together to develop safety and health management systems that go beyond basic compliance with all applicable OSHA standards and result in immediate and long-term prevention of job-related injuries and illnesses.
2. To reduce by three percent (3%) annually (see MNOSHA's strategic plan) the number of injuries, illnesses and fatalities affecting participant contractors, with a focus on eliminating injuries and fatalities resulting from those hazards that are the four leading causes of death on construction sites (falls, struck-by, caught in/or between and electrocutions).
3. To increase the number of construction contractors that implement effective safety and health programs and provide effective safety and health training for management, supervisors and employees.
4. To promote open lines of communication between MNOSHA and the construction industry in pursuit of safety, sharing best practices and lessons learned.

2. Responsibilities:

2.1 Associated General Contractors of MN (AGC)

AGC is a non-profit professional trade association that is dedicated to promoting opportunity and excellence in the building and highway construction industry throughout the State of Minnesota. It is through membership in the AGC that contractors are able to participate in this partnership. The AGC (by designated representative or committee) is responsible for:

1. Reviewing contractor applications/annual activity and conducting qualifying inspections to ensure compliance with the partnership requirements.
2. Providing recommendations to contractors for continual improvement.
3. Providing recommendations to MNOSHA for partnership improvements.

4. Attending CHASE Cooperative Compliance Partnership Program visits.
5. Gathering participant activity annually to evaluate the overall success of the program.

2.2 MN Occupational Health and Safety (MNOSHA)

MNOSHA Compliance is responsible for enforcing regulations through worksite inspections, responding to employee complaints, conducting accident investigations and providing education and technical assistance. Specific to this partnership MNOSHA Compliance is responsible for:

1. Working with AGC CHASE contractors to identify workplace hazards.
2. Sharing lessons learned and best practices.
3. Leading CHASE Cooperative Compliance Partnership Program visits.
4. Providing certain benefits to qualified participants.

2.3 Contractor

Contractor refers to an active member of the AGC that classifies their business under NAICS code 236 Construction of Buildings, 237 Heavy and Civil Construction, or 238 Specialty Trade Contractors. Contractors are responsible for:

1. Supplying accurate reporting on application and annual activity reporting during site visits. Eligibility requirements at each CHASE Level are evaluated organizationally, so must be included in written programs and practiced on every site.
2. Participating in learning opportunities provided through the Partnership program such as quarterly meetings, and Cooperative Partnership site visits.
3. Addressing any program or training gaps identified promptly.
4. Continuing to strive for culture and programs improvement including but not limited to advancing to the next level in CHASE and enrolling qualified projects in the Cooperative Partnership Program.

3.1 Definitions:

Accident: An undesirable event that results from a failure to meet acceptable standards and causes harm to people, property or processes.

Activity report: CHASE Partnership contractors are required to reapply to the program annually. This information is requested through an annual activity survey conducted by the AGC of Minnesota. It includes reporting data from the contractor's OSHA 300A, and safety program performance.

AWAIR: A workplace accident and injury reduction program. This is a MNOSHA requirement that employers implement a safety and health program.

Designated safety personnel: A person who, through training and experience, must be able to recognize hazards and will have the authority to take prompt corrective action.

ERTK: Employee right-to-know program. In addition to the Hazard Communication (GHS) Standard, ERTK is a program that informs employees of the hazardous substances and physical agents that could harm them in the workplace.

Field construction supervisory personnel: Anyone in the field who is authorized to assign or make decisions about work tasks.

NAICS: North American Industrial Classification System; a numeric code that identifies a business’s primary industry.

Near-miss: Hazard in the workplace that could potentially cause bodily harm where there is employee exposure (for example, top rail of guardrail system is missing, and employees are working in the area).

Programmed inspection: An inspection aimed at high-risk areas determined by MNOSHA’s targeting and priority methods, such as current special emphasis programs.

Qualifying inspection: An inspection performed for the purpose of evaluating the implementation of safety programs for existing and prospective program participants. Inspections are conducted by AGC representatives, allowing access to project sites throughout Minnesota. A contractor’s partnership contact is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the visit. AGC will evaluate the contractor’s ability to demonstrate their qualification based on CHASE criteria for participation in the partnership program, and which level for the next twelve (12) months.

Unprogrammed inspection: An inspection performed in response to a report of imminent danger, a fatality or catastrophe or a formal complaint.

4. CHASE Program

The CHASE Partnership Program is a voluntary program for contractors to participate in and demonstrate implementation of effective safety and health programs. The program consists of 3 tiers: Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Each tier of the program increases contractors’ commitment to safety, and contractors participating in the program have access to various program benefits which are listed below in 4.2.

Level 1: The basic level in the **CHASE Minnesota** program for applicants wanting to meet the minimum requirements of a safety and health program.

Level 2: The intermediate level in the **CHASE Minnesota** program for applicants desiring a more comprehensive safety and health program.

Level 3: The peak level in the **Minnesota CHASE** program for applicants striving to be an industry leader with a very comprehensive safety and health program.

Table 4.1 illustrates the requirements of the various levels of the program; refer to Section 4.1 for full details of the qualifications at each level. Table 4.2 illustrates the benefits at each level of the program; refer to Section 4.2 for full details of the benefits.

Table 4.1 - Levels

Summary of partnership requirements	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1. Annual Report and Qualifying Inspection	X	X	X
2. Comprehensive safety and health program	X	X	X
3. Six-foot fall-protection policy	X	X	X
4. Prohibited substance policy (Req’s vary)	X	X	X

5. Safety and health program administrator (Time and Qual. vary)	Part Time	50%	100%
6. Orientation & Training (Req's vary)	X	X	X
7. OSHA 10-hour course for field supervisors	30%	X	
8. OSHA 30-hour course for field supervisors		30%	X
9. Weekly safety meetings	X	X	X
10. Safety committee	X	X	Leadership
11. Hazard Recognition & Evaluation Process	X	X	X
12. Employee involvement (Requirements vary by level)	X	X	X
13. No willful violations within past five years	X	X	X
14. No fatalities/catastrophes with violations within past five years	X	X	X
15. No repeat violations within past five years		X	X
16. Incident rate at or below MNDLI Survey of Occupational Injuries & Illness Statistics (three-year average)		=/<	≤ 30%
17. Designated safety person at each site			X
18. Positive recognition practice for employees/trade partners			X
19. Trade partner prequal and accountability			X
20. Maintain specialty contractors safety and health programs			X
21. Mental health resources and training			X
22. Lessons learned sharing on incident & near misses			X
23. Leadership values safety			X

4.1 Level Requirements

Level 1: Applicants seeking Level 1 status must meet the following requirements*:

1. Submit an activity update and receive a qualifying jobsite safety audit by AGC of MN representative(s) annually.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive written safety and health program based on the ANSI A10.38-2000 Guidelines or the OSHA 1989 Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines; it must include a written A Workplace Accident and Injury Reduction (AWAIR) program and Employee Right-to-Know (ERTK) program. The written program shall incorporate in its entirety 29 CFR 1926 Subpart C, General Safety & Health Provisions.
3. Implement a six-foot fall-protection policy for work governed by OSHA Standards for Construction 1926, including Subparts L (Scaffolding), M (Fall Protection) and R (Steel Erection). Safety monitors cannot be used as a means of fall protection.

4. Construction is classified as hazardous work necessitating the development, implementation and maintenance of a prohibited substance policy and testing program that complies with applicable laws, statutes and agreements. An employee assistance program shall be available to any employee covered by the testing program.
5. Assign at least one *trained person* with responsibility for employee safety as a portion of their job responsibilities. Their duties must include administration of the participant's safety and health program, and conducting documented safety and health inspections of ongoing work. A trained employee is one who has completed 30-hours of construction safety training relevant to the work being performed (OSHA 30) within the first 12 months of joining the partnership. Documented ongoing use of a safety consultant may satisfy this requirement.
6. Conduct an orientation of all new employees in the safety and health programs of the company for avoidance of hazards specific to the contractor's worksite(s); for example, training on AWAIR and ERTK programs.
7. 30% of all field construction supervisory personnel receive 10 hours of safety hazard awareness training related to their scope of work within the first year of applying. Examples of training may include Union specific training, OSHA 10, Pro 10, MSHA, HAZWOPPER, Basic Plus, C-STOP, Epic, Contractor Safety Orientation, Refinery Construction and Maintenance Safety, et al. upon review.
8. Conduct and document weekly employee safety meetings.
9. A safety committee comprised of employees and management must meet at documented intervals. Meetings are documented with an agenda. The committee must comply with applicable law and rules.
10. Hazard recognition and evaluation process must be documented on at least a weekly basis. The size of the job will dictate whether more frequent documentation is needed. Controlling contractors of multi-employer sites, or tiered subcontractors will include evaluation of all contractors/scope under their control in addition to work they perform. This could include:
 - Task assessments
 - JHA/JSA
 - Safety Inspections
11. Employee involvement in the safety and health program. Such as:
 - a. participation of employees in self-audits, site inspections, or
 - b. job hazard analysis, or
 - c. safety and health program reviews, or
 - d. safety training, or
 - e. incident near-miss or accident investigations
12. Have no willful violations in MN that became final within the past five years.
13. Have no fatalities or catastrophes in MN resulting in serious citations related to the incident that became final within the past five years.

**AGC may make discretionary recommendations to MNOSHA for contractors to enter level 1 if due to size, or startup they don't quite have all of the program requirements in place, but demonstrate a desire to utilize this*

Partnership for the development of this program as they grow. Ongoing participation will be evaluated annually and is subject to MNOSHA's approval.

Level 2 – In addition to the criteria outlined in Level 1, applicants seeking Level 2 status must meet the following requirements:

1. Drug policy includes reasonable suspicion training for a minimum of one person trained organizationally.
2. Assign at least one *trained person* with responsibility for employee safety for at least 50% of their time and responsibilities. Documented ongoing use of a safety consultant may satisfy this requirement.
3. In addition to offering training for workers avoidance of hazards, including new hire orientation, employers also have methods for measuring the effectiveness of the training. For example, testing knowledge or skill demonstration.
4. 30% of all field construction supervisory personnel receive 30 hours of safety hazard awareness training related to their scope of work within the first year of applying. Examples of training may include OSHA 30, STSC, OSHA 510 et al upon review. The remaining 70% of all field construction supervisory personnel have received/completed 10 hours of safety hazard training as outlined in Level 1 requirements.
5. Employee involvement in the safety and health program.
 - a. Self-audits, and
 - b. Site inspections, and
 - c. Job hazard analysis, and
 - d. Safety and health program reviews, and
 - e. Safety training, and
 - f. Incident near-miss and accident reporting, and
 - g. Conducting site specific safety orientations.
6. Have no repeat violations in MN that became final in the past five years.
7. Maintain a total case injury/illness incidence rate (three-year average) that is at or below the most current MN Department of Labor Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illness Statistics for the applicant's three-digit North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code. The most recent numbers will usually be those from the previous calendar year.

Level 3 – In addition to the criteria outlined in Level 1 & 2, applicants seeking Level 3 status must meet the following requirements:

1. Drug policy includes reasonable suspicion training for one person at each project site.
2. Employ a dedicated safety employee (100% of time and responsibility) who administers the contractor's safety and health program and conducts documented safety inspections of all work. The employee must be qualified to be responsible for continual improvement and mitigating risk throughout the organization, by degree, certificate, accreditation or demonstrated experience.

3. Mentorship and/or skill qualification process for new and apprentice workers.
4. At least one safety personnel designated at each site who conducts and documents safety inspections of all work on the contractor's projects, and through training and experience, can recognize hazards and have authority to take prompt corrective action. Training equivalent to the OSHA 30-Hour Construction Outreach Course is satisfactory.
5. Positive recognition for employees and/or subcontractors that demonstrate safe work practices and behaviors.
6. Prequalifies trade partners based on their safety record prior to contracting for work. Trade partners are contractually obligated and expected to comply with Level 3 contractor policies except whereby specialty or work scope it would be deemed more hazardous to do so.
7. Maintain a total case injury/illness incidence rate (three-year average) that is at or 30% below the most current MN Department of Labor Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illness Statistics for the applicant's three-digit North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code. The most recent numbers will usually be those from the previous calendar year.
8. Mental health training is provided to supervisors, and resources are provided to employees. Training must include how to recognize if someone may be struggling, and how to connect them with help.
9. Incident and near miss investigation that implements the fundamentals of continuous improvement. Incident lessons learned are being shared, beyond the safety committee.
10. Leadership (defined as CEO, President, Vice President, Executives etc.) values safety which can be demonstrated by:
 - a. Participating in Safety Committee
 - b. Conducting Safety Audits
 - c. Incorporating Safety goals into strategic plan

4.2 Program Benefits

Table 4.2 - Benefits

Summary of partnership incentives	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1. Receives written recognition by AGC of MN and MNOSHA	X	X	X
2. No penalty for nonserious violations	X	X	X
3. Receives maximum good faith penalty reductions (30%)		X	X
4. Serious citation settlement options		X	X
5. MNOSHA Cooperative Compliance Partnership Program (Site Specific)		> 1 yr.	X

Level 1 Program Benefits include:

1. Will be given special written recognition from MNOSHA and AGC of MN designating the contractor as a participant in the CHASE Minnesota partnership program; and
2. Will not receive a penalty assessment for citations related to nonserious violations, provided the hazards are abated within MNOSHA's prescribed abatement period.

Level 2 and 3 participants will have access to the following benefits in addition to the benefits available for Level 1.

1. Will be given the maximum good faith penalty reductions (currently 30 percent) available under the existing MNOSHA penalty credit policy (MNOSHA's penalty credit policy will be made available to partnership participants); and
2. Will be offered the following options if they receive serious citations *that settle as nonserious citations during an informal conference* (according to MNOSHA existing practices). The entire citation must be contested to receive any reduction.
 - a. The employer may accept the nonserious rating and pay the penalty. *The nonserious rating will stay on the company's record.*
 - b. The employer may accept the nonserious rating and use the penalty dollars toward the retraining of its hourly employees about the specific issues regarding the citation. *The nonserious rating will stay on the company's record.*
 - c. The employer may choose to train *all of its supervisory level employees* about the specific issues regarding the citation, within an agreed upon time period. The employer would then provide to the MNOSHA principal/IH3:
 - i. documentation of the training (including topic, training roster, date of training and the name of the training provider);
 - ii. documentation of how the company follows the procedures outlined in the company's AWAIR program, including –
 - identification of company goals and objectives,
 - company's roles and responsibilities,
 - methods of hazard identification/analysis and control,
 - methods of communication,
 - how accidents will be communicated,
 - how the safety and health programs will be enforced,
 - disciplinary actions and
 - how the programs will be reviewed and how safety committees are operating within the company; and
 - When the employer has provided this documentation, the nonserious citation and penalty will be rescinded from the company's record.
3. Contractors that have obtained Level 2 for a minimum of a year, or Level 3 have an opportunity to enroll projects into MNOSHA Cooperative Compliance Partnership Program (CCP). CCP is a site-specific compliance program with MNOSHA and the AGC of MN. Refer to MNOSHA CCP Program for additional information and full program benefits.
 - a. Mentorship and exposure to MNOSHA for field personnel.

- b. Increased communication and education opportunities during visits.
- c. No citations issued for hazards abated immediately during CCP site surveys.
- d. Excluded from programmed inspection visits.
- e. Quarterly peer meetings facilitated by MNOSHA for sharing best practices and lessons learned.

5 Process

5.1 Initial Applications may be submitted by contractors at any time throughout the year. The process for application is as follows:

1. Complete the CHASE Minnesota application form (available on the AGC of MN Website). The application needs to be accompanied by:
 - a. Prior years' OSHA 300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses.
 - b. Copy of Safety and Health Programs.
 - c. Self Audit Evaluation showing qualifications Level 1, 2 or 3 have been met.
 - d. Submit to AGC of MN for review.
2. AGC of MN will administer the application and review the required program documents. If applicant appears to have met program requirements a qualifying inspection will be scheduled at a project site. Project site inspections must meet these criteria:
 - a. Shall not be an active CCP project.
 - b. Should be an active demonstration of the type of work the contractor regularly self performs.
 - c. Contractor's Site Supervisor should attend in addition to the contractor's primary partnership contact.
 - d. MNOSHA will serve in an advisory capacity to AGC only and does not attend qualifying inspections.
3. Upon completion of the Qualifying inspection, the AGC of MN will send a letter to MNOSHA with recommendation for the contractor's participation level for the next calendar year.
4. MNOSHA will prepare and send a congratulatory letter to the qualified contractor recognizing their participation level.
 - a. The MNOSHA partnership coordinator will add the partnering contractor's name to the DLI web page.

5.2 Continued Participation

1. Annually AGC of MN will request an activity report be completed by Partnership Participants; this information is used to gauge progress towards program goals.
2. Qualifying inspection will be conducted annually; AGC of MN will reach out to the contractor's primary partnership contact to schedule. It will be at the annual qualifying inspection when a contractor can request to advance to the next level or become eligible to apply for CCP. Upon completion of the

inspection process for recommendation is the same as with the initial application, refer to steps 2-4 under 5.1 initial application for details.

3. Cooperative Compliance Partnership (CCP) program will be open to those contractors that have achieved and participated at Level 2 for at least one year or Level 3. CCP requires a site-specific application available on the AGC of MN's website. Site selection will be mutually agreed upon between MNOSHA Compliance and AGC of MN.

5.3 Contractor Termination or Demotion

1. A contractor's participation level may be reduced or participation in the partnership may be terminated by AGC of MN or MNOSHA if one or more of the following occurs:
 - a. An inspection by AGC of MN or MNOSHA reveals a significant deviation from program criteria.
 - b. The contractor has falsified information on the application or supporting records.
 - c. The contractor's total case injury/illness incidence rate rises above criteria set in paragraph 4.1 (for Levels 2, 3).
 - d. The contractor takes other such actions that may be determined to be grounds for termination by the AGC of MN.
 - e. The contractor is no longer a member in good standing with AGC of MN.
2. Prior to final termination or demotion of a contractor's status, the following will occur:
 - a. The contractor will be notified in writing of the potential for status change.
 - b. The notice will include an explanation of the reasons for the proposed status change.
 - c. The contractor will have an opportunity to reply to the written notice within a period of 30 days. If contractor is able to outline a specific, measurable plan to address the cause for proposed demotion/termination; MNOSHA and AGC representatives may allow the contractor to remain probationally for a defined period to demonstrate effort towards outlined goals which will be communicated in writing.
 - d. The contractor will have the right to appeal before AGC of MN, who will make a recommendation to MNOSHA for final approval.
3. AGC of MN and MNOSHA will have the authority to reinstate the contractor if it determines the contractor's experience was unusual and not necessarily inconsistent with a sound safety and health program. No contractor shall be reinstated without MNOSHA's approval. In this event, another quality assurance inspection may be performed.
 - a. Any contractor may terminate participation in the program at any time.
 - b. Contractors that leave the program either voluntarily or by penalty are not eligible to reapply to the program until one (1) full year has passed from the notice of termination.

6 Partnership Legacy

6.1 Partnership Evaluation

1. The partnership will be evaluated annually to determine whether the participant contractors' cumulative number of injuries, illnesses and fatalities have reduced by 3% annually as outlined in MNOSHA's strategic plan goal. AGC of MN will be responsible for collating baseline and annual performance data upon which the partnership will be measured. This aggregated data will be reported to MNOSHA annually.
2. Participants' aggregate injury/illness incidence rates (total case rates) and fatality rates will be compared with current MN Department of Labor Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illness Statistics

data to determine whether goals have been met.

3. Participant incidence of injuries from the hazards that are the four leading causes of death on construction sites per MNOSHA's Strategic Plan (falls, struck-by, caught in/or between and electrocutions) will be measured and compared against a baseline established in the first year of the partnership.
4. If all *signatory partners* agree, partnership criteria may be revised annually based on recommendations for continual improvement.
5. AGC of MN and MNOSHA will review this partnership at least every third January (three years) after its initial partnership agreement signing. Any changes or modification will require a re-signing of the partnership agreement.
6. Any signatory party to the partnership may withdraw from the agreement at any time after submitting written notification of intent to AGC of MN.
7. AGC of MN and MNOSHA may withdraw from this agreement at any time and the agreement shall immediately terminate upon notice to the signatory parties.

6.2 Disclaimers

1. Confidentiality

- a. Information submitted by contractors as part of the application or renewal process, as well as information obtained by virtue of the contractor's application or participation in the program, will be used only to measure the effectiveness of the partnership program. Except that, in the event of a MNOSHA inspection, information that is relevant to the investigation will be provided to the MNOSHA investigator upon request. Results of self-audits made by the applicant will not be used for the purposes of issuing citations. Information submitted by contractors is governed by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and other relevant laws and regulations.

2. Limitations

- a. The agreement pertains specifically to construction sites and does not apply to contractor yards, shops or administrative offices.
- b. This agreement will not in any way affect the employers' or the employees' ability to exercise their rights under the OSH Act and OSHA/MNOSHA regulations.



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Date 7/14/2026

Signed by:

Stacy Arnold, Director – Safety & Health, AGC of Minnesota

Nicole Blissenbach, Commissioner

Signed by:

Jared Anderson, Chair, AGC of Minnesota CHASE Committee

Nancy Zentgraf, OSHA Management Team Director

DocuSigned by:

Tim Worke, CEO, AGC of Minnesota

James Kruger, Director of MNOSHA Compliance

Signed by:

Kirk Ilenda, Chair, AGC of Minnesota