WASHINGTON'S 75TH ANNUAL

Governor's Industrial Safety and Health Conference

PRESENTS

The 2026 Governor's Lifesaving Awards

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Greater Tacoma Convention Center

Awards Presented by
Eric Johnson

Washington State Governor's Industrial Safety & Health Advisory Board

Educating Washington's Workforce Since 1949

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

About the Governor's Lifesaving Awards

The Lifesaving Award is available to employees in Washington state who are covered by industrial insurance, either through the State Fund or a Self-Insured employer. The lifesaving action must have been performed while on duty.

The award is for personally performing urgently required hands-on action in a lifesaving effort. In the case of law enforcement persons, fire fighters, EMTs, healthcare professionals, or other similar type professionals, such actions must not be part of their normal duties, but must be above and beyond the call of duty.

A Humanitarian Award may be given when the victim didn't survive in spite of the lifesaving efforts.

Special thanks to the Governor's Lifesaving Awards Committee Members: Tina Bacon, Christy Clark, Dominique Damian, Robert Gallagher and Luis Isiordia.

Awards Presenter

For nearly four decades, award winning television journalist **Eric Johnson** told moving stories about the amazing people of the Northwest. In his 25 years at KOMO-TV, Eric was awarded more than two dozen regional Emmy Awards. In 2007, he earned the highest prize in television news, the national Edward R. Murrow award for best feature story in the country about a group of American children who traveled to Cuba to play a series of baseball games against Cuban teams. Washington State University recently created a journalism scholarship in Eric's name.

Before anchoring the news at KOMO, Eric was a sportscaster covering the Sonics, the Mariners, Seahawks, and other local sports teams young and old. One of his most beloved shows was "Eric's Little Heroes" a popular, lighthearted television series capturing the innocent humor, chaos, and charm of young children playing youth league sports. Eric retired from KOMO News in 2024, but you can still catch him on local TV programming, radio, and podcasts.

Governor's Lifesaving Awards Recipients

Congratulations to all the recipients of the 2026 Governor's Lifesaving Awards!

Boeing – Ryan Long

While working together in Boeing's airplane jack shop, Ryan Long saw his coworker, Steven Phillips, laying on the floor of their office area. He tried to wake him, but Steven was unresponsive, so Ryan called Boeing's emergency line and began CPR. Ryan performed CPR for about 10 minutes until paramedics arrived and took over. The medics said they were very impressed with Ryan's courage and quick response that was critical in saving Steven's life.

Department of Agriculture – Trudy Arndt, Alene Clement, and Oliver Hoffman

Workers at the Department of Agriculture Seed Lab in Yakima saw a coworker lose consciousness, fall, hit her head on the floor, and start convulsing. Oliver Hoffman contacted 911 then checked her airway and breathing. Alene Clement and Trudy Arndt placed the victim in the recovery position and made sure she was safe. They waited by her side until medics arrived and took the woman to the hospital where she was treated and released.

Dept. of Fish and Wildlife – Noah Collell and Jacob Portnoy

Fish and Wildlife technicians Jacob Portnoy and Noah Collell were conducting a routine steelhead spawning ground survey on a remote section of Matheny Creek in the Olympic Mountains. After bushwhacking down a steep canyon, they reached the creek and heard faint cries for help. They found a man who had fallen about 60 feet into the canyon. He had severe spinal injuries that left him unable to walk and stranded him there overnight.

The man, who installs microphones in remote forestlands to monitor wildlife for adventure scientists, had just finished placing equipment and was hiking back to his car when he said the trail gave way beneath him.

Drawing on their wilderness first aid training, Jacob and Noah quickly realized moving the man would likely worsen his injuries. Instead, they administered first aid, wrapped him in an emergency blanket, and provided additional layers to keep him warm. Jacob made the difficult climb back through rugged terrain to reach cell service to call for help, while Noah remained with the man, continuing first aid, keeping him warm, and providing reassurance.

Jacob met the first responders and guided them down the safest route through the dense brush. He used survey flagging tape to mark the route so additional rescue personnel could quickly and safely reach the scene.

Together, Jacob and Noah's actions were instrumental in saving the victim's life. Their rapid assessment, effective first aid, decisive action, and continued assistance to responding rescue teams kept the victim alive and stable until he could be extracted by helicopter and transported for medical treatment.

Dept. of Natural Resources – Adrian Gutierrez

A group of firefighters dispatched to battle a wildland fire in Montana had returned to camp for dinner. Firefighter Nichels felt food get stuck part way down his throat. Adrian Gutierrez, a member of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' Lacamas Hand Crew, immediately performed the Heimlich maneuver on Nichels. The blockage was cleared after a few thrusts. Medics performed a wellness check and cleared Nichels to return to wildland firefighting duty the following morning.

Dept. of Natural Resources – Jerry Mizar, Jessica Moyer, and Steve Ogden

Department of Natural Resources accounting office worker, Cindy Parker, had taken her eight-year-old granddaughter to an appointment and brought her to her office afterward. While she was at her desk, Cindy suddenly passed out. Her granddaughter alerted coworkers, "Something's wrong with Grandma!" Jessica Moyer and Suzan Deaver responded immediately, finding Cindy unresponsive and slumped in her chair. Suzan quickly notified Steve Ogden, then ensured that the granddaughter was removed from the scene. Steve and Jessica helped move Cindy to the floor where her condition rapidly declined. Jerry Mizar overheard "call 911" and started toward them when he heard Steve yell, "Get the AED!" Jerry immediately turned around and grabbed the automated external defibrillator machine. Steve delivered two shocks and performed CPR while Jerry provided rescue breaths. Medics transported Cindy to the hospital and remarkably she was able to return to work in just over a month. One of the responding paramedics said it was one of the best office workplace responses he'd ever seen.

Grant County Public Works – Raul Ramirez

Landfill worker, Raul Ramirez, was walking toward the break room for lunch when he saw a customer lying on the ground. He rushed to the man and directed another customer to call 911. Raul couldn't find a heartbeat, so he started performing CPR. When the site foreman arrived, he assisted by monitoring the customer's condition while Raul continued chest compressions. During this time, landfill staff had already retrieved the AED but did not apply it immediately because the customer's heartbeat returned briefly on two separate occasions before stopping again. Each time the man's heart stopped, Raul resumed CPR. When first responders arrived, they used the AED and he was later taken to the hospital for further care. The man survived and was able to connect with Raul and thanked him for saving his life.

Joel Olson Trucking – Jason Beatty and Weyerhaeuser – Brian Chastain

Logging truck drivers, Jason Beatty and Brian Chastain, heard over the radio that a young man, wearing all black, was walking across the Hoffstadt Creek Bridge in the early morning hours and to watch out for him. As the drivers crossed the bridge, they saw the 19-year-old sitting on the edge and about to go over, so they stopped to talk to him. During the conversation he stated he was upset about a breakup. His plan was to take some pills and sit on the railing until he passed out and fell off the bridge. The two drivers were able to get the young man off the railing and take the remaining drugs away from him. Both drivers stayed on scene with the young man for about an hour until medics arrived to provide aid.

Thurston County – Rhiver Cox and Leif Rankin

Thurston County workers, Rhiver Cox and Leif Rankin, were driving in Olympia when they noticed people gathered around a man slumped over in the driver's seat of his pickup. They called 911 and checked the man where they found he had no pulse. Dispatchers instructed the workers to pull him from the truck and start CPR. The man's pickup, which was still running, began to roll into the intersection. Leif was able to stop it and move it to the side of the road. Rhiver and Leif took turns performing CPR on the man until firefighters and police arrived to take over. The man survived thanks to Rhiver and Leif's quick actions and emergency training.