

SAFETY MATTERS CONSTRUCTION SERIES



Preventing Construction Injuries and Fatalities

OSHA statistics show that **one of every five** workplace fatalities is a construction worker. Despite its high fatality rate, construction can be a safe occupation when workers are aware of the hazards and use an effective Safety and Health Program. OSHA has grouped the hazards that cause the most serious construction accidents in four major categories: Electrical incidents, Falls, Struck-By, and Excavation.

Electrical Incidents

Electricity has become essential to modern life. Perhaps because it is such a familiar part of our surroundings, it often is not treated with the respect it deserves. Safety and health programs must address electrical incidents and the variety of ways electricity becomes a hazard.



Falls

Falls are the leading cause of fatalities in the construction industry. An average of 362 fatal falls occurred each year from 1995 to 1999, with the trend on the increase. It is important that safety and health programs contain provisions to protect workers from falls on the job.



Struck-By

The second highest cause of construction-related deaths is being struck by an object. Approximately 75% of struck-by fatalities involve heavy equipment such as trucks or cranes. Safety and health programs must take into account the many ways struck-by accidents can occur.



Excavation/Trenching

Cave-ins are perhaps the most feared trenching hazard. But other potentially fatal hazards exist, including asphyxiation due to lack of oxygen in a confined space, inhalation of toxic fumes, drowning, etc. Electrocutation or explosions can occur when workers contact underground utilities. OSHA requires that workers in trenches and excavations be protected, and that safety and health programs address the variety of hazards they face.



Understanding the Danger and Avoiding the Hazards

The **SAFETY MATTERS CONSTRUCTION SERIES** utilizes OSHA-produced training materials to create a series of construction safety resources that may be utilized for job-site training in safe work practices to prevent injuries in the four identified areas.

Safety Matters Construction Series information is extracted from OSHA safety materials. For additional information consult www.OSHA.gov