Construction Safety - OSHA's Focus Four Hazards

While the construction industry is largely responsible for helping move the American economy forward by building the structures that we live, work, and play in, these job sites remain one of the most hazardous working environments. In fact, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, it's estimated that one out of every five worker deaths are in construction. Additionally, the industry is responsible for more than 1,000 fatalities per year and more than 200,000 non-fatal injuries annually. The month of November, we'll discuss some of the leading causes of injury on construction sites and what can be done to prevent them.

OSHA's "Focus Four" Hazards

The good news is that there's been an increased focus on job site safety over the past several decades, so fatalities and recordable injuries are considerably down from what they once were. Additionally, OSHA, or the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, has been able to pinpoint the four major causes of injury on construction sites, thereby permitting safety professionals to more specifically zero in on training and better prevent incidents before they occur.

These four main hazards, or "focus four," that OSHA has identified as the major threats to the construction industry are:

Falls: This category consists of both falls from heights and slip and falls. It's the leading cause of injury and death on construction job sites.

Struck by an object: This involves being struck by building materials or construction equipment.

Electrocution: Electrocution can lead to burns and in the most severe cases, cardiac arrest, and nerve issues.

Caught-in/between: On any type of construction site, there's the threat of the body, or parts of the body, getting caught in between other objects or equipment.

Construction-Related Injury Statistics

It's estimated that one out of every five work-related deaths in the private sector is in construction. That's 20 percent, an astounding number. Furthermore, it's estimated that if the construction industry could eliminate the focus four hazards from their job sites, it would save nearly 600 lives each year (not to mention a countless number of injuries).

Falls are the leading cause of death in the construction industry, accounting for about 34 percent of all fatalities. Being struck by an object is the next most common cause of death on the job site, accounting for more than 10 percent of all fatalities. Electrocution and getting caught in or between an object come in at 9 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Together, the focus four account for about 60 percent of all construction fatalities per year, per data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Next Week: OSHA Rules and Regulations for Focus Four Hazards

Revision #1
Created 2023-02-22 23:17:20 UTC by Nicole Blum
Updated 2023-02-22 23:17:49 UTC by Nicole Blum