

Announcement

National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction — United States, May 2–6, 2016

The National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction* will be observed May 2–6, 2016, and is hosted by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration and stakeholders, including CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. During the voluntary stand-down, construction employers are asked to speak directly to their employees about fall hazards to reinforce the importance of adhering to fall prevention measures. Employers are encouraged to have a Spanish speaker deliver the stand-down message to Spanish-speaking employees (simultaneous translation is an alternative). Across the United States, state agencies, public health practitioners, and private contractors will promote participation in the event.

In 2014, a total of 845 fatal on-the-job injuries were reported among construction workers, more deaths than in any other industry, and the most for this industry sector since 2008 (1). Falls on construction sites are the leading cause of death in construction (39.9% of all worker deaths in 2014) (2). During 2008–2010 (3), 55% of all fatal falls in construction occurred in the smallest construction establishments (1–10 employees). Although construction is a high-risk industry for all workers, Hispanic immigrants (20% of the U.S. construction workforce) (4), are at increased risk because of language and cultural barriers to effective safety communication. As the construction workforce grows (up 1.2% to 9.9 million workers in 2015)

(5), so does the need for effective safety messages that can overcome any barriers (6).

Falls are preventable. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has worked with construction sector stakeholders through a government-labor-management partnership to develop a national falls prevention campaign aimed at construction contractors, onsite supervisors, and workers. Modeled on U.S. military programs, the annual stand-down is a component of this campaign.

References

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4. CPWR Data Center, US Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010–2014 March supplement to the current population survey. Silver Spring, MD: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPWR Data Center.
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6. Flynn MA, Cunningham TR, Guerin RJ, et al. DHHS (NIOSH) publication no. 2015–178. Overlapping vulnerabilities: the occupational safety and health of young workers in small construction firms. Cincinnati, OH: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health; 2015. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-178/>

* <https://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown/>.