

The Research and Development Institute of the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

## We Can Help Victims' Families

**T**he terrible events of September 11 changed all our lives. But for building trades workers, the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City has been especially personal. Although hundreds of our brothers and sisters who were working there escaped after two hijacked airliners struck, some did not. We know that some of our members were killed in the fires and resulting collapse of the twin towers; the number likely includes a few firefighters who also were ironworkers. Our affiliate unions are still taking count. (No construction workers were killed in the attack that morning on the Pentagon.)

Even as most of us were hearing the first news reports, construction workers were on the way to ground zero as volunteers, right behind the police and firefighters. Operating engineers began moving heavy equipment and their mobile hazmat unit to the disaster zone. Boilermakers, carpenters, electrical workers, sheetmetal workers, and others walked from their jobs all over town. A few drove from the midwestern states. Our people risked their health and their lives to try to find the more than 3,000 reported missing. Hundreds of ironworkers, laborers, operating engineers, teamsters, and others are still there around the clock.

Most of us can't help at the site, but there is still something we can do. We can help the families of our union members who won't ever go home.

Some of the families lost their only breadwinners. Many have young children. They are going to need financial help to pay the rent, medical, and other bills, while they try to put their lives back together.

So, the Building and Construction Trades Department has set up a special fund. It is

*(continued on page 2)*



President Sullivan

## BCTD Sends OSHA A Draft Silica Standard

**T**he Building and Construction Trades Department, on behalf of the construction unions in the AFL-CIO, has sent John L. Henshaw, the new head of OSHA, a proposed standard to protect workers from silica. The proposed standard was developed by the BCTD Safety and Health Committee.

BCTD President Edward C. Sullivan is asking the new OSHA chief to promptly begin a rulemaking process, by first consulting OSHA's Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health—to keep the process on schedule. OSHA's last published regulatory agenda said a silica standard would be proposed in November 2001, but some federal regulations have been delayed since President Bush took office.

Unprotected exposures to silica, the most common mineral in the earth's crust, can cause silicosis, a debilitating lung disease, and increase the risk of tuberculosis and lung cancer. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that workers are still being needlessly exposed, and some are dying as a result. Reported deaths from silicosis in the U.S. had dropped to 235 in 1994, but NIOSH says silica-related deaths are underreported.

This year, OSHA noted, "silica exposure remains a serious threat to nearly 2 million U.S. workers, including more than 100,000...in high-risk jobs such as abrasive blasting...rock drilling...and tunneling." Construction workers are on the front lines with silica also when sawing, grinding, hammering, chipping, crushing, even dry sweeping—wherever there's work with sand, rock (quartz), concrete, or masonry.

"Sometimes, desperately needed changes take far too long," said Sullivan. "Sixty years ago, Frances Perkins, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's secretary of labor, said, 'We know the methods to control [silica]—let us put them into practice.' It's way past time for our government to act to protect working people from this threat to their very lives."

The text proposed by the BCTD was drafted by a silica subcommittee chaired by Gerald O'Malley, vice president of the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers union. The Center to Protect Workers' Rights provided staff support. CPWR research includes ways to protect workers against silica exposures.

The draft calls for exposure limits on the job, exposure monitoring, methods to control exposures, medical monitoring of

*(continued on page 2)*

### Former nuclear energy workers: Hanford, Oak Ridge, Savannah River

To apply for federal compensation for exposures to beryllium, radiation, or other hazards—or for information, call toll free: 1-866-888-3322 or call 1-800-866-9663.

### INSIDE

**2** New CPWR  
Executive Director

**3** Journeymen  
Go to College

**FOLD-OUT POSTER:  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE!**

### Safety and Health Training for Construction Workers on Major Demolition Projects

CPWR and BCTD affiliates have developed a 16-hour, hands-on course that covers the essentials:

**OSHA 10-hour (Smart Mark)  
+  
Hazard Recognition and PPE**

For details:  
Steve Surtees, 301-578-8500  
or [ssurtees@cpwr.com](mailto:ssurtees@cpwr.com).

### Special Fund for Families

*(continued from page 1)*

tax exempt and all donations will go to the victims' families. We have started with \$100,000, but are asking you to contribute and spread the word to friends, family, and co-workers. No amount is too small. Please make checks payable to Building Trades Families' Relief Fund and send them to: BCTD, Suite 600, 815 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20006. A committee in New York will administer the fund. In the meantime, if you have questions, contact Bobby Crider, our operations director, at 202-347-1461.

Thank you.

### BCTD Sends OSHA a Draft

*(continued from page 1)*

workers, respiratory protection, hazard warnings, and safety training. A coalition, which includes the National Industrial Sand Association, has indicated there is broad industry support for a comprehensive standard.

Although there is no OSHA standard to protect workers against silica, NIOSH recommends that workers exposed to silica at some levels use NIOSH-approved respirators. Respirator use requires special training. For information on silica protections go to [www.elcosh.org](http://www.elcosh.org) or [www.bacweb.org](http://www.bacweb.org)

## CPWR Board Names Stafford As CPWR Head

**E**rich J. (Pete) Stafford, a veteran of two decades of public health work for building trades unions, is the new executive director of the Center to Protect Workers' Rights. Stafford was named to the post as of July 16 by the CPWR Board of Directors. Formerly CPWR's deputy director, Stafford has spent 11 years at CPWR overseeing day-to-day management and coordinating its safety and health research and training projects with unions, universities, and employer and other organizations.

"We are delighted to have Pete Stafford take the helm," said Edward C. Sullivan, president of the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD), AFL-CIO, and of CPWR. "He has done a fine job managing CPWR. He has demonstrated a talent for focusing stakeholders on the public health needs of construction workers and is dedicated to improving safety and

health in our industry."

Stafford, 41, has served on several government and industry advisory boards and will continue to serve as director of the BCTD Safety and Health department, which meets monthly with safety and health directors of the affiliate unions. Having developed a closer integration of CPWR with the BCTD and its affiliates, he said he hopes to further strengthen CPWR's scientific and technical capacities and emphasize practical implementation of research findings.

CPWR's 35 staffers focus on construction safety and health and related issues, such as work practices, the labor market, and quality of life for workers and their families. CPWR is the research and development arm of the BCTD.

Robert J. Pleasure, CPWR executive director for three years, has taken a position with the AFL-CIO.



Pete Stafford

## Policy Research Funds Awarded To Universities

**C**PWR this summer announced \$70,000 grants to each of three universities to begin regional multidisciplinary policy research on construction in Construction Policy Research Centers.

The University of Maryland will establish a construction policy initiative within its National Center for Smart Growth Research to consider workers' compensation practices and how safety might be built into performance-based bidding. The University of Wisconsin will study the

connection between total quality management and safety. The Harvard University School of Public Health plans, with Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to develop a conference to coordinate construction policy research nationwide. The funds, part of CPWR's cooperative agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, may be extended for up to two years.

The goal is to examine public policy and private procurement policies that can make construction work safer.

## Elevator Safety Moves Up After CPWR Reports on Hazards

In 2001, at least three states have passed laws designed to improve elevator safety for workers and the public, and more are expected to follow. The laws have been pushed by a coalition of labor and industry. Buttressing the effort was a study by CPWR pointing up safety problems in the industry.

“Without a question, research has pushed this [effort] along,” said Dana A. Brigham, general president of the International Union of Elevator Constructors. “A review of the accidents found these are preventable.”

The union has been working with the National Assn. of Vertical Transportation Professionals and the National Elevator Industry Inc. to

establish safety rules state by state.

In 2000, a CPWR study found that elevators and escalators seriously hurt 17,000 and kill about 30 people each year. The two main causes of the deaths are falls and being caught in/between moving parts of elevators/escalators. The report, by Michael McCann, CPWR director of safety and ergonomics, recommended adequate training of workers, lockout/tagout during elevator or escalator service or repairs, a permit-required confined-space program for elevator shafts, and fall protection during work in or near elevator shafts.

New laws in Florida, Maryland, and Vermont set minimum require-

ments for inspectors, contractors, and mechanics and safety codes for elevators and other equipment. For instance, mechanics must have 5 years of training through the National Elevator Industry Education Program or a registered apprentice program. Standards in Florida and Maryland were boosted by the legislation; Vermont had no standard before. Measures in California and Nebraska were expected to become law, said John Quackenbush, a former elevator constructors union official, now a safety consultant.

The CPWR report, *Deaths and Injuries Involving Elevators or Escalators*, is at [www.cpwr.com](http://www.cpwr.com) or call CPWR at 301-578-8500.

## Construction Workers Go to College For Safety, Health Certificate Program

In recent years, OSHA standards and owner/client requirements have increased demand for safety and health staff on construction sites. The New Jersey DOT requires that lead paint removal contractors have a health and safety officer. Michigan requires that contractors getting lower-cost “wrap-around” insurance coverage hire full-time safety and health directors. But both states have had difficulty finding people who know enough about both construction and occupational safety and health and don’t have production responsibilities that can create a conflict of interest.

To meet the need for safety and health skills and to enhance construction as a career, CPWR plans to begin a construction safety and health certificate program for workers. The program, with Drexel University and the Philadelphia Apprenticeship Coordinators Association, is part of CPWR’s research funded by NIOSH.



**Domenic Gaeta, at left, and Jack Altieri, Painters District Council 21 instructors, calibrate air monitoring pumps to measure toxic exposures, while at the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 19 training facility, in Philadelphia. The two took a new Construction Safety and Health Review Course taught by Drexel University in spring 2001.**

To prepare the new program, last spring, a new 8-week evening college-level Construction Safety and Health Review Course was taught to 9 students—safety and health directors, apprenticeship instructors, and journeymen from 6 trades. The class,

which covered how to measure and control hazards, may be offered again.

Also, local building trades workers will conduct independent study projects for college credits.

For more information, call Pam Susi, c/o 301-578-8500, ext. 145.



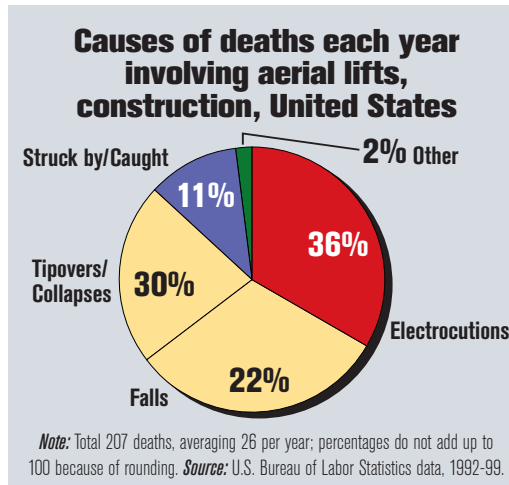
# Deaths from Aerial Lifts: Falls, Electrocutions

**A**erial lifts are killing a construction worker every other week, on average. Lives could be saved with PPE for fall protection and training on the type of aerial lift to be used.

A CPWR analysis of such deaths in construction in the United States in 1992-99 has found that most of the 26 deaths each year are from falls — a fall out of a lift or a when a lift tips over or collapses. Other deaths are caused by electrocution and a few are “struck by” or “caught in/between” deaths. More than three-fourths of the 9 electrocutions each year are from contact with overhead power lines.

Michael McCann, CPWR director of safety and ergonomics, checked U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports for each of 207 deaths in the 8 years.

The trades most often affected are electricians and electric power installer/repairers, followed by laborers and painters. Most of the deaths (69 %) were in bucket lifts; 27% were in scissor lifts. (Working from



crane personnel platforms caused 2 to 3 deaths per year. Standing on forklifts or in front-end loader or backhoe buckets—which is against OSHA rules—caused some more deaths, but those were not counted in this study.)

CPWR has a hazard alert pocket card for workers (in English and Spanish) on fall-arrest harnesses. To learn more about the study or to order the hazard alert, call CPWR at 301-578- 8500 or go to [www.cpwr.com](http://www.cpwr.com) or [www.elcosh.org](http://www.elcosh.org).

## CPWR Info on Concrete Drivers, Electrical Hazards

**R**esearchers at Mount Sinai School of Medicine have looked at safety hazards faced by ready mixed concrete truck drivers, in response to a request from the Teamsters Union. The resulting CPWR report identifies the main hazards—such as, slips, trips, and falls, impact/ mechanical hazards during equipment operations, and ergonomic risks, and noise—and ways to prevent injuries and illnesses.

A new hazard alert, *Electric Safety in Construction for Non-Electricians*, tells how to prevent the 90 deaths each year of construction workers who are not electricians. Most of the electrocutions are from contact with overhead power lines, but there are other causes. The card is available in Spanish, also.

To get the hazard alert or the report, *Ready Mixed Concrete Truck Drivers: Work-Related Hazards and Recommendations for Controls*, or other CPWR publications, call CPWR at 301-578-8500 or go to [www.cpwr.com](http://www.cpwr.com).

Web Site: [www.cpwr.com](http://www.cpwr.com)

The Center to Protect Workers' Rights  
Edward C. Sullivan, President  
Joseph Maloney, Secretary-Treasurer  
8484 Georgia Ave., Suite 1000  
Silver Spring, MD 20910



This publication was made possible by the Center to Protect Workers' Rights (CPWR) as part of a research agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, NIOSH grant GU317202. The information provided here is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of NIOSH.

ON Center is published by  
The Center to Protect Workers' Rights  
Postage paid at Washington, D.C.  
Postmaster: Send address corrections to On Center, c/o CPWR  
8484 Georgia Avenue, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910

ON Center  
Volume 1, No. 3  
November 2001