The Construction Chart Book, now in its fifth edition, marks the 16th year since it was first published in 1997. While this edition updates statistics on topics covered in previous editions, it also highlights emerging issues within the construction industry (for example, green construction and displaced workers) and explores topics such as the aging workforce and health disparities.

Yet, with these additions, the fifth edition continues to follow in the footsteps of previous chart books; that is, to characterize the changing construction industry and its workers in the United States, monitor the impact of such changes on worker safety and health, and identify priorities for safety and health interventions in the future. Although the book addresses a broad audience, it focuses on aspects of the construction industry most important to decision makers responsible for worker safety and health.

The data used for the chart book are from a wide variety of available sources, many of which are large national datasets collected by government agencies, such as the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For the fifth edition, several datasets are added to the analyses, including the Green Goods and Services Survey, Occupational Information Network, Occupational Supplement to the National Health Interview Survey, Health and Retirement Study, Survey of Income and Program Participation, and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) data from the U.S. Green Building Council, just to name a few. Data sources used for each page are briefly discussed; relevant publications and websites are carefully selected and cited throughout this book.

Most of the employment and demographic data compiled for this edition are updated to 2010 to match the latest available injury and illness data. However, there are some exceptions. For instance, the industry data from the Economic Census are collected every five years, most recently in 2007. Thus, some recent changes in the construction industry may not be covered. In addition, most of the tabulations have been conducted by the CPWR Data Center staff specifically for this book. Therefore, some numbers may not be comparable to other publications using similar data sources due to differing quantitative methods.

This fifth edition, composed of about 250 charts and tables, is presented in 55 topic pages with text and charts displayed side by side for each topic. These topics are catalogued into nine sections. The “Industry Summary” section profiles the features of construction establishments and their owners, analyzing the impact of the recent economic downturn on this industry, and the development of green construction. The section on “Labor Force Characteristics” highlights the restructured demographics of the construction workforce and addresses topics such as union membership, aging workforce, Hispanic workers, immigration, and green jobs in the construction industry. “Employment and Income” analyzes the trends in construction employment and unemployment, work hours, earnings and benefits (such as health insurance coverage and retirement plans), alternative employment (such as self-employment), worker misclassification, displaced workers, and so on. This section is followed by “Education and Training,” which describes educational attainment, access to computers and Internet, apprenticeships, and projected employment.

Safety and health issues are greatly enhanced in this new edition compared to previous versions; five separate sections cover safety and health topics in more detail. “Hazards and Exposures” summarizes general work conditions and hazards in construction. “Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries” tracks the trend and patterns of construction injuries since 1992, while “Occupational Diseases” explores prevalence of work-related illnesses among construction workers. OSHA inspections, citations, and penalties in the construction industry are reported in the “OSHA Enforcement and Injury Costs” section. Costs of construction injuries and illnesses are also discussed in that section. “Health Indicators and Services” underscores risk factors and chronic conditions among construction workers, revealing health and health services disparities among demographic groups in construction.

Despite the attempt to serve as a comprehensive resource and reference tool for our broad audience, the results are limited by data availability, space, and other constraints. Readers are strongly urged to not only study the charts, but also read the accompanying text and notes carefully while using this book.